



**BENEATH
MISTY MOUNTAINS**

Donna Mitchell

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Phone: 662-283-1192

E-Mail: choate@WorldEvangelism.org

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Publisher's Statement

With what thankfulness J.C. and I witnessed the work of Loy and Donna Mitchell throughout the nation of Zimbabwe! They began their tenure during the infancy of the church in that country and stayed with it through the decades, only returning to the States to live in August of 1997.

Many things have changed in Zimbabwe in subsequent years — as throughout the African continent— many of them being political changes that were not good. In contrast, the spiritual changes are very encouraging. Infancy has developed into maturity, so that churches, preachers, and individual Christians can now stand on their own feet. All of us are thankful for this positive growth and we look forward to the generations of Zimbabweans who will continue in faithfulness to the Gospel which Loy and Donna brought to them.

Betty (Mrs. J.C.) Choate
Winona, MS
March 2015

Preface

“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” (Isaiah 46:4, NIV).

Recently I carried the wrong basket to class! I have a traditional basket packed and ready to carry to each class I teach, and I merely pick up the basket as I leave the house to teach the class. What a surprise when I realized in Mutare Bible School English class that I had material for the Wednesday evening Children’s Bible class. That was one of the many reminders that I am getting more absent minded and perhaps it is time to slow the pace and consider leaving the mission field. But the thought tore my heart.

Nevertheless, since Bobby and Nancy Wheat, our daughter and son-in-law, left us in July of this year of 1996, we have contemplated returning to the states to continue to work for the Lord in some capacity and be nearer our children and grandchildren in our declining years. As these thoughts come to me, I think of all we need to do before leaving our home in Africa. Perhaps recording some of the incidents of our lives since my book *Among the People of the Sun* was written in 1990 should top the list.

Donna Mitchell
1996

Foreword

“A good man (and a good woman) leaves an inheritance to his children’s children ...” (Proverbs 13:22)

Let me tear away the mists of time and let you see the valley where my parents made a home. It was a city sheltered by misty mountains. One of the mountain ranges is even named for the mist — the *Vumba* (or sometimes *Bvumba*) is the local word for mist or drizzle. Granite slopes are softened by the flat-topped trees of Africa, mountain acacia, msasa, mnondo, and in the higher elevations towering yellow wood, waterberry and the Mulanje cedar. In the fastness of these mountains, frequently obscured by the mist, are bushbuck, the wide-eyed bush baby, and the secretive samanga monkey. Leopards will see the visitor, but not the reverse. Baboons alone will “bark” their challenge, a cry that is African as a thatched hut, spooky as a haunted house.

Let me tear away the mist of distance and tell you of the distinguished mission work done by Loy and Donna Mitchell in the city of Mutare, in eastern Zimbabwe. The numbers are there, spanning the years since 1958, the baptism of tens of thousands, the development of church leaders over the decades.

I noticed that by the 1980s they had been bequeathed the profoundly respectful Shona terms of *Sekuru* (grandfather) and *Ambuya* (grandmother). To their great credit Africans respect age. Dad did his most effective work as a *Sekuru*. Distinguished mission work occurs over the passage of time, in the hearts of a second and third generation of believers, in the emergence of elders and preachers.

Let me tear away the mists of the years and tell you of a photograph. Loy Mitchell is sitting on a low bench, a mud and thatch hut behind him, with two African brethren. They each hold a ragged hymnbook, and they are all singing hymns. He is one of them, the tall Shona man. Loy Mitchell had the oratory and work ethic to serve an American congregation of a thousand. Instead he served African tribesmen, a dozen or fifty at a time.

Let me tear away the mist of an introvert and allow you to see his help meet and colleague, Donna Mitchell, who wrote this book and the one that preceded it (*Among the People of the Sun*). She was the quiet yet steady force behind him. All of us knew that Donna Mitchell could communicate without saying a word. But when she did speak, it was with a gentleness and wisdom that made one yearn for more. I think the family only realized the strength of her steely, quiet resolve when she passed away too soon. The hole in Dad's soul was open for all to see. How blessed he was to find Debbie, a second wife who filled that hole.

Let me tear away the smoke of a fragrant wood fire. Four hundred Zimbabwean Christians sing hymns to a matchless God in their rich harmony. There is nothing so strong as a formidable African alto, so smooth as an African tenor, so substantial as an African bass chorus. Under a starry sky, their voices extend beyond the stars to the Maker of the stars.

Let me tear away the mists of the pain, because Zimbabweans are a people who have known great pain: the indignity of colonialism, the terror of war, the crush of a dictator, and the specter of hunger and want. Mist sometimes hides the beautiful, but it also protects the broken hearted. There is sunshine in the faces of Zimbabweans when they greet you, but if you look closely you will see a cloud behind the smile, in their eyes. They sense the need of a Savior more deeply than most.

Of course it is God who saves them, but we would be remiss if we did not thank the pioneers, those missionaries who swept away the mist of sin from the hearts of God's children. There have been mission works in Churches of Christ as productive as that of Loy and Donna Mitchell in Zimbabwe; there have been none more so. Loy and Donna Mitchell must surely by now have their names placed in a special record that includes J.M. McCaleb in Japan, Parker Henderson in the Caribbean, and a man Loy respected deeply, W.N. Short in central Africa. I urge anyone who has read this far to find out about these, and other missionaries, and make them your own inspiration. That way the mists of Christianity, deadened by plenty and self-satisfaction, will be swept away.

The mists have already obscured Donna's memory a little. *Ambuya* is waiting, however, over there. One day the mists will close over the life of her husband, too. The mist that gently lays them to rest, however, is counterbalanced by the enlightened hearts of thousands of African believers; their bright hearts will beat for an eternity in a place where the light of the sun has burned away the mist.

Stan Mitchell

2013

CHAPTER 1

ZIMBABWE 1991

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning” (Daniel 2:19-21, NIV).

“Marcia and I recalled the mortar attacks of 1976 in Umtali when we watched the reports about the shelling of Iraq,” Nancy wrote from the United States. It was not the best way to begin a new year. We listened to news reports from the British Broadcasting Company and were concerned about the Americans moving into another foreign land to fight.

Overseas reactions to the decisions of the Americans were negative here. The Palestine Liberation Organization is strong in Zimbabwe and their representative enjoys a lot of public attention. He was quick to condemn the American action. The media here felt that the United Nations should have been in control of the situation, and some harsh words were spoken about American interference in others’ affairs. Otherwise, life went on as usual in our lives in Zimbabwe. Our major concern within the country was the need for rain, and we could foresee many people going hungry during another drought.

A new congregation began at Mupeti as a result of World Bible School contacts, and Roy and Jaxie Palmer were assisting Martin Amwari in starting a church in Chikanga, a new suburb of Mutare. The work of the Lord was growing in Manicaland as it had never done before. We met with village churches twice monthly on Sundays, held home studies throughout the week, and continued to teach classes at Mutare School of Preaching.

From our son William came news that he had performed a wedding ceremony for an older couple in Gordon; his Christian friend had been widowed and now married a widow. What an honor for our young son to be called upon to “tie the knot”.

In several ways, we were feeling the effects of the world situation. As communism weakened in Eastern Europe, we saw some of their

citizens arriving in Africa. Margaret Fleming, a Christian therapist in Harare, asked us if we would keep a Bulgarian family for a few days and then transport them to South Africa on our planned trip down there. A young couple, Ely and Tomi, and their baby Tao, arrived by bus. All their possessions were in their backpacks and the baby appeared to be undernourished. They were both professionals in their land, but the wages were so low that it was impossible to live. In their backpacks were a few cameras and other items, which they hoped to barter for goods or cash here in order to live.

We could not communicate in one another's language so we had to make sign language and laugh a lot. They contacted a Bulgarian family here; Lydia Zlatav and her son Mencho came to visit, interpret, and attend church meetings with us. Lydia's husband was here on contract to teach at a technical college built by the USA but staffed by Eastern Europeans. In time, Mencho, a handsome young tennis teacher, was baptized, and traveled with us to South Africa for the lectureship. The young couple, Ely and Tomi, became Christians, too, and were taken in by a family in the Kempton Park Church in South Africa. They had great difficulty finding employment and in establishing residence, but they were determined not to return to their homeland.

Soon after our return from South Africa, we received a midnight call from Earl Edwards of Freed-Hardeman University. He and Lora planned to bring a student group to work with us during the summer mission's time. Two of the students would stay with us until the end of the summer. We looked forward to that. Earl's wife, Gwen, had died of cancer since we last saw them in Italy, and he married Lora Young, who had also gone to school with us at Central Christian College.

In April we visited the church at Jowo. We were told of a woman in the area who had been attacked by a crocodile in the Macheke River while she was washing her clothes. The croc grabbed her on the upper leg and she was not able to free herself, but another person came to the rescue by taking a long pole and beating the crocodile on the head until the creature released its hold. One must be careful near the rivers. This did not prevent the baptism of two young girls

in the Handi River following our meeting.

We had a letter from my mother; she seemed to be in good spirits and had been checking on her siblings with their various ailments. Old age was more difficult for some than others, and we were reminded that we are moving into the older generation as time passed for Mother.

We shared letters from home with Palmers; when they had a good letter day, they shared with us. They were anxiously awaiting the birth of Philip and Elaine's baby in Tanzania.

Reaching the Lost

“Reaching the Lost” was our lectureship theme in January of 1991. Dr. Des Stumph and a new convert drove all the way from Cape Town to Mutare! Des is a heavy man, a devout Christian, and a dreamer. We were quite amazed at his zeal. He had taught and converted many of his patients and had publicly confronted faith healers in South Africa, speaking in English, Afrikaans, and Zulu. He was loving and lovable, and he thoroughly enjoyed any preaching exercise; every year at Southern Africa Bible School Lectureship Des sat on the front row with his latest convert. Usually had driven non-stop from the Cape. Dr. Des is one of our unforgettable friends in Africa.

Mathias Chikafa was a graduate of Mutare Bible School who moved to the town of Kotwa in Mudzi District. That district was rather isolated, and until Chikafa and another graduate of the school, Lawrence Sedze, moved there, the church of Christ did not exist there. It was a very long drive from here and we did not go there often, but we kept in touch. Soon we heard from a man in Mutoko who was starting the church with Chikafa's assistance; it was rewarding to hear of Christians multiplying by spreading the gospel.

Some of the rural churches rented their buildings to women operating crèches (nursery schools); these women were trained by government instructors to aid in the readiness of children, and it was a good opportunity for rural Christians to help in their community. When we went to Sharara one Sunday, two women asked me to speak to a group of children. They performed for us, singing, and

acting out stories.— what a lot of enthusiasm they had! In one song they delightfully imitated a little rabbit hopping about.

I had taught them to sing “God is so Good” (“Mwari Wakanaka”), and they were pleased to sing it for us. It sounded to our ears like “Gode is so Gu’du” because their language uses only one sound for each vowel; also, their words end in vowels so they often supply one, as in “goodu”. I could not have controlled one hundred children as efficiently as those two women did! When their performance was over, the church leaders led the children into the church building and sat them down on the floor at the front of the assembly. It was very hot and I saw several children falling asleep, but they caused no disturbance. (Sarah Snell and Beth Walker sent crayons and books for the children at Sharara.)

It was also very obvious at that time that people were suffering from the drought and hunger. Their land was stripped of vegetation except for a few stalks of maize drying in the fields, animals had died or looked emaciated, and people came to church hoping to receive food.

From America came Nancy’s news that they went to Abilene Christian University Lectureship and spoke to several people who encouraged them in their search for support to return to Zimbabwe. Nancy also spent some time in Amarillo with a specialist; she would probably have to return for microsurgery. She took comfort in the many prayers being offered regarding their African plans and her back surgery.

Dave and Irene Meikle won airline tickets to the United States and visited Stanley and Marj in California as well as the Wheats, Redds, and others in Abilene. They got to attend some of the lectureships and had a great reunion with our children and others they had known in Africa. Nancy was thrilled that the Meikles got to see the Wheats’ display at mission emphasis night and hear of their plans to return to Zimbabwe. Others announced plans to go to West Africa and Mozambique.

From Stanley came news that Dave and Irene had gone with them to visit the discount stores and they were happy to meet Frazier Park folk, many of whom farmed, like the Meikles. Stanley had also

heard from Chuck Palmer, who said his parents were having the time of their lives back in Zimbabwe. That was good to hear, even from afar. We felt richly blessed in having Roy and Jaxie Palmer with us for as long as their health allowed.

William kept his father informed of the football and basketball scores, plus a brief political report: four newsmen had disappeared in the Gulf War and he had seen a clip of Iraq's leader with his guest, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.

“I HAVE A GRANDMA IN AFRICA”

Anonymous

I like to walk with Grandma
Her steps are short like mine
She doesn't say, "Now hurry up,"
She always takes her time.
I like to walk with grandma,
Her eyes see things I do,
Wee pebbles bright, a funny cloud,
Half hidden drops of dew.
Most people have to hurry;
They do not stop and see,
I'm glad that God made Grandmas
Unrushed and young like me!

We missed seeing our grandchildren growing up, although we felt that it would be awhile before we were "unrushed" as the poem says. We sent tapes from time to time, reading stories, and giving them messages. Marcia and Nancy let the children listen, especially at bedtime. Matthew said, "My daddy tells me I have a grandma in Africa". Another time he said, "Can you take me to Grandma's where she has some fresh bread from the oven?"

Stefanie sent a note and a drawing of "Stefanie flying a kite". Her mother wrote that Stef could make tea and coffee and clean, sweep, mop, and make beds. (And Mom, please send some Zimbabwean tea). How wonderful it was to hear that little Christopher was reading his Bible, sounding out hard words; he was only five. Ian's claim to fame at three was being busy, being stubborn (his dad said

aggressive), and saying “Grandma plays ping pong!” when he saw my picture.

In April Christopher sent a “Find the egg” drawing: a rather surprised looking rabbit sat on a giant size egg — we found it. He also sent a picture of grandpa but said he had to start up high to get him in. During their Bible reading, Ian had revealed that it rained on Noah’s ark for forty nights and forty wake-up times. Nancy said Ian had stood on the table and shouted that he was preaching. Since Bobby is not a dramatic speaker, Nancy reckoned the boldness came from the Mitchell blood. Stefanie wrote a neat little letter saying she was taking a Bible correspondence course and would have a big test to see if she could pass to the third grade. Meanwhile, her parents were considering home-schooling and had met with Mike and Debbie Banks who were teaching their six children very effectively.

Our California grandchild, Tracy, was reported to be talking at two, doing puzzles, and listening to stories read by both parents, who are vociferous readers. Stanley said she had her Grandpa Mitchell’s dimples and the intelligence of both grandfathers.

And Matthew, who was struggling to overcome the fear of water while his daddy taught him to swim, said, “Please don’t baptize me, Daddy!”

News from a Distant Land

“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land” (Proverbs 25:25, NIV).

Our children made contact with their lives in Africa from time to time. Marcia wrote that she had a phone call from Duwein Steyn, a South African, who was visiting in Garland. She also said they were driving behind a car with a bumper sticker labeled “I love Zimbabwe”. Lee followed the driver into a shopping center and they had a chat. The man had gone to school at Nhowe Mission. Marcia and Lee invited him to attend a Bible talk.

William passed his Zimbabwean newspapers to an African American. They were enjoying College Station. (“Mornings remind me of Zimbabwe,” he wrote). William was accepted into the Ph. D. program at Texas A and M University.

Marcia booked a flight to Amarillo, Texas, and then went to Beaver, Oklahoma, to be with Nancy following her surgery. We thanked God for our girls who helped and encouraged one another. Nancy had gone to Texas to help Marcia when her babies were born. Anxious moments for parents and grandparents who live far away.

We were proud to hear that Stanley was the first graduate Pepperdine Bible student to get a 4.00 grade average. William and Karen planned to attend Stanley's graduation but were unable to do so because of William's examinations and Karen's hectic legal schedule. Stan wrote that William and Karen sent him a lovely leather-bound Oxford Bible. We were sad because we could not attend the ceremony.

The greatest news in 1991 was that Wheats would be returning to Zimbabwe in January to help us in our work. In December they moved to Andrews, Texas, and stayed with Glen and Betty Wheat while they spent time with the church that would be overseeing their work for the next five years. We praised God and continued to pray for them.

Some Positive Reinforcement

Everyone likes encouragement, and Bobby and Nancy were especially good about giving me confidence to go on with the work I tried to do. I went to the States in August of 1991 to be with Mother and the children. I also spoke to a group of ladies in Beaver. Bobby wrote the following:

Our time the last few weeks has been occupied in a wonderful way by a visit from Donna Mitchell. She arrived in the States on August 21st, spending the first few days in Garland with Lee and Marcia, then traveling to Bartlesville. We drove to Bartlesville for the weekend of September 1, then brought Donna back to Beaver with us on September 2nd. While she was here, Donna spoke to the ladies in a 'Ladies Encouragement Day' we held on September 8th. Donna and I spent several hours proofreading and editing the manuscript for the book she is writing about their years in Africa. We hope to have it off to the publisher soon. It is

always a blessing to have Donna with us. She emulates the worthy woman of Proverbs 31 and is a wonderful example to our children as well as to Nancy and me of commitment and service in the kingdom of God. I wish everyone could have a mother-in-law like mine!

I had experienced some disappointments and grief and Bobby's encouragement, including a rose from the florist, helped me to go on and to concentrate on the good things in my life. I had many blessings to count.

A Voice from the Past

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”
(II Timothy 4:2, KJV).

During that same visit in the States, Bobby spoke at Dewey, Oklahoma, and A.C. Williams also gave a short talk. A. C. held a special place in our family history and my brother, Terrel Taylor, who is an elder at Dewey, told this story:

A.C. Williams held a meeting in the school building at Timber Hill in 1921. During that gospel meeting, he baptized 32 people, including his own father, Charlie and Pearl Walker, three of the Walker children, and Annie and Les Taylor. (The Walkers and Taylors were my grandparents). Of special interest to Terrel was the fact that some of his wife Charlotte's people were also taught by A. C. in Western Oklahoma. Years later Terrel met and married Charlotte; in recent years A.C. had married Charlotte's aunt. Both had lost their spouses by death. A. C. was in his nineties but recalled all those facts although he spoke very briefly. It was an honor to see him again, and to be reminded of our history in the church. A. C. Williams had outlived most of those early converts.

Lawrence Williams, A.C.'s brother, lived at Timber Hill and preached during most of my childhood. He was my uncle, married

to Daddy's sister, Agnes, and he baptized me when I was thirteen.

The Remaining Parent

“Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long life on the earth” (Ephesians 6:2, 3, KJV).

My mother's letters were a blessing to me. She wrote that Loy had sent her a snapshot of some preachers “and Donna's nose”. She kept her sense of humor! Mother kept me informed about family and friends. She seemed to be getting out more since Daddy's death, and we were thankful that she had activities to fill some of her lonely hours. She wrote that she went with the Senior Citizens to a church gathering at Broken Arrow; they had lived in Broken Arrow in the late fifties and Daddy had served as an elder there. Many people greeted her with love and that lifted her spirits. She wrote that a widower from the Dewey church sat with her on the bus and at the table. She tried to avoid him because she did not want anyone to think she was interested in another man; her first love was her only love! I think her friend knew that and simply wanted to encourage her.

Mother also wrote of the pleasure of being with her surviving siblings; she had taken a trip with her sister Glen and brother Kenneth. Kenneth drove the car. They walked through the cemeteries and visited relatives and friends.

She wrote that it was a cool April and felt like “blackberry weather”. That brought back memories of the hard work of picking and the pleasure of eating blackberry cobbler. I could remember seeing her wearing Daddy's overalls over her dress as she waded the branch [stream] and picked berries. She fought chiggers and mosquitoes to give us those delicious pies and jams.

Mother spoke of the early days of their marriage. She and Ross Taylor had grown up together in a little Oklahoma farming community. They told us that they were put to sleep on the floor when they were babies while their parents visited with one another. The night they went to Brother Jones' house in Big Cabin and were married, they were told a story which gave them a jolt. Another

couple had returned a week following their wedding to say they had been married in the wrong county. A couple had to be married in the county in which they purchased their marriage license. Red-faced, Daddy told the preacher they had done the same thing. They crossed the county line and repeated the ceremony. They were married, both times, on December 24, 1930.

Mother related that she and Daddy lived first with my grandparents. My Grandma Taylor had a baby girl and two other children at home. Money was short and it became necessary for Daddy to leave home and travel with a harvest crew for several weeks. Not willing to sit around in her husband's parents' house, Mother went to Tulsa and worked for her former employers as a nanny. Working for those prosperous people gave Mother, a poor coal miner's daughter, new experiences. Before she married she travelled to Minnesota with the family. This seemed a long journey and the farthest she had ever traveled. She liked to tell of making a "failed" cake and putting it away in the kitchen. Next day her employers asked her for the recipe for her "plum pudding," which was delicious. They had returned home with their friends, looked for refreshments, and found the fallen cake.

Old Friends and New

Make new friends but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold,
New-made friendships, like new wine,
Age will mellow and refine.
Friendships that have stood the test —
Time and change — are surely best.
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow gray;
Friendship never knows decay.
For 'mid old friends, tried and true,
Once more our youth renew.
But old friends, alas! May die;
New friends their places supply.
Cherish friendship in your breast:
New is good, but old is best;

Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.

Anonymous, from *The Book of Virtues*

“The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In May the Freed-Hardeman group arrived. We renewed the friendship of Earl and Lora Edwards and spent many hours visiting and encouraging one another. The young people were well prepared with lessons, and Loy put them to work. They were not as well prepared for some of the differences in culture, but they met them with good spirits. Tricia Wood and Tim Tarbet were the two who planned to stay for the remainder of the American summer with us. They were both fine young people. Tricia was especially talented and adaptable; it was a pleasure having her both in classes and in the kitchen. She and some of the other girls taught the children at the crèche at Mutare Bible School, and she continued to teach after the group left. Tricia was a great help with the Bible correspondence work and in helping me with some computer work. (At that time, I was typing a book about the church for Paul Chimhungwe).

Also in the group was Jason Fish whom we had met years earlier in Eudora, Kansas, and Brad Blake, a preacher’s son who had gone on mission trips to India and Nigeria with his dad. Rachel and Clyde Slimp were a fine married couple. Rachel spent a year in Tanzania as a child. Tim’s dad was a preacher in Connecticut and later New Mexico and Texas; his grandfather had preached in Australia and his uncle Gaston Tarbet, was a well-known missionary and missions teacher. Tricia’s parents were both teachers at Freed-Hardeman; her dad had been in graduate school with Loy in 1962. Mark was an older student, perhaps 30, a late convert filled with zeal. Daphne Tucker was already a graduate and ready to teach school; she was a very sensitive girl. Beth Hailey was perhaps the youngest in the group, a vivacious and lovable person. I believe all these young men became preachers and missionaries when they left school.

During the Freed campaign, we made a trip to Aberfoyle and had the misfortune of encountering division in the little church on the beautiful mountain tea estates. We met one group near the gate to the

estate; Brad gave a lesson and Loy spoke awhile from II Corinthians about church division. We usually went further up the mountain to a small mud structure under thatch.

There were two gospel meetings held simultaneously during the campaign. Each evening I took Earl and a group to 7th Avenue for lessons while Loy took one of the students to preach in Dangamvura. The students helped teach in the schools, in home studies, and at Hugh's Engineering during their daily devotional period.

By Sunday we were about worn out when, following worship at 7th Avenue, we set out for Gwaai River, a long drive which took us within 20 kilometers of the game park. The next morning we saw elephants and other game before we actually entered the national park, so it was exciting from the start. We took our truck and the Palmer's truck; the Palmers drove my car at home and eventually brought the remaining luggage in the church truck, meeting us at the airport on the night of the group's departure. The thirteen workers had done a great job and we were grateful to all supporters, and especially to our old friends, Earl and Lora. Earl, dean of the School of Biblical Studies, wrote:

It was a privilege for my wife and me to work alongside Loy and Donna Mitchell in and around Mutare, Zimbabwe, the period May 8-22 along with 11 students from Freed-Hardeman University. Loy, Donna, Lora, and I had attended school together at Central Christian College about 39 or 40 years ago, and had seen one another four or five times over the intervening years. And now we had another cherished opportunity to work together in spreading the kingdom. To you, his supporters, I wish to say that he and Donna are still the same dedicated, devoted, hardworking servants that we knew forty years ago. Most of the last 30 years they have spent in their adopted country, Zimbabwe, and almost everyone in over 200 churches there respects them very highly. In any problem that arises, their leadership is sought. In my judgment, they are having as great an influence for God as a missionary family could possibly have. Their credibility is very great because of admirable service for

more than twenty years. May I commend those of you who are supporting them. I have purposely asked Loy to include this note in his next report. Brotherly, Earl D. Edwards.

Mabel Rogers and Leonard Bailey had met and married while working at Namwianga Mission, Zambia, in the early 60's, and they had worked in Zambia and Rhodesia before moving to Canada in 1978. (Mabel is Canadian and Leonard is British.) In 1991, they made a beautiful sentimental journey to Africa and were able to draw on funds they had left here. With them was one of their sons, Ron, and his wife Chris. They revisited Zambia and South Africa and spent some time in Harare and Mutare in Zimbabwe. They were elated about renewed friendships, saddened at some of the problems and difficulties, and extremely grateful for being the blessing of a return visit. They blessed us, too.

We again walked down memory lane when Helen Classen Brown came for a visit. She was working at Chimala Mission in Tanzania at the time and shared a house with Beth Short Ewing. Robin, Donna Marie, and their children, Allen and Belinda, came from Germany to visit Helen. What a lovely little family Donna Marie and Robin had; the children reminded us of the various Classen cousins we had known in the past. Helen was a very proud grandmother but not a foolish one. She is adept at being lovingly firm and as always she was a lot of fun. Their visit was so brief we could hardly believe they had been here. Donna Marie and Helen chatted with me as I made pies in the kitchen; then we shared dinner with the Palmers and another visiting couple from Zambia, Don and Rita Boyd, and a single man, Larry Doyle. (The Palmers always opened their home to visitors).

Herbie Wilson, an old friend from Bulawayo English church days, spent a few days with us. Herbie and Irene had worked in Botswana as well as Rhodesia and were in Michigan at the time of their visit.

Then came Flora and Mark Swartz who spent a week with us. With them was Flora's niece, Tracy Ramseyer, and she and our "temporary daughter" Tricia became such good friends that Tracy decided to spend the rest of her time here while Flora and Mark

visited a family in Bulawayo. Tracy was a beautiful girl and a talented musician. She and Tricia worked well together.

Like the icing on the cake came the visit of our dear friends Doyle and Louise Gilliam. They had spent several weeks working in Malawi and planned to go from Mutare to South Africa and on to Brazil to see Mark and Ellen (Gilliam) Abshier. They brought us a sweet little album of photos taken of our children whom they had visited in the states. Doyle preached in a gospel meeting and gave lectures at the Bible School about Islam, a rapidly growing religion in Africa and the rest of the world. Stephen Gilliam came with his parents; Stephen had worked with Doyle and Louise in Malawi for a month and planned to continue his work in South Africa with World Bible School.

Susan and Shannon Houtrouw, who were working at Nhowe Mission for three months, came for a weekend and helped distribute invitations to Doyle's meeting. Actually, Loy drove to Nhowe taking Tim and Tracy, and brought the Houtrouws here via Sharara where Loy spoke at their gospel meeting. They struggled home at 11:00 p.m., described their meal of sadza and tough meat, then ate pie, ice cream, and in some cases lasagna before going to bed. Jaxie Palmer always helped with the food; in fact, she is famous for her cuisine.

Ray and Avril Grottis hosted a farewell party before Tim and Tricia left. We were ready to leave when Tim discovered that he had lost his passport; we searched for some time before Tim discovered it in a book. Off we went to Nhowe mission to collect something from Shannon Houtrouw; Tricia rode part way in the back of the truck and then moved up front. She said she sat in the back in order to have a good cry about leaving. In Harare we had tea with Stan and Lindy Frank, met with the Avondale church where brother Gushakusha, a Bible School graduate taught our Bible class, and then rushed off to the airport. It was another tearful farewell before Tim and Tricia went into the departure lounge and we went upstairs to the balcony to await their takeoff.

Early in July we drove to Harare for the funeral of Joseph Crewe. Joseph and Joy had lived in Mutare several times during the time our children were growing up, and our children were friends

with their children. They had a big family and although some had emigrated and settled in South Africa, Australia, and Canada, they had all managed to return to support their mother during their time of grief.

Later in July we took Shannon and Susan to Hwange, Victoria Falls, and Namwianga Mission. We stayed with Rita and Don Boyd and ate communal meals with a group of missionaries and Zambian workers. We also heard that Dow Merritt had died in Searcy, Arkansas. He was a great man of God who devoted his life to Africa. The Zambian church sang beautifully during the lectureship and responded enthusiastically to Loy's preaching. We completed the circle by going home via Kariba in order to allow Susan and Shannon to see the large dam and lake on the Zambezi River. Kariba provided electrical power for Zambia and Zimbabwe and the lake was a great tourist resort.

Home Again

Home — a place that our feet may leave, but not our hearts.

Anonymous

Being with my mother was always rather like becoming a child again. Mother added to that feeling by treating me like a child at times, reminding me to get some rest, baking blackberry cobbler especially for me, and taking me to the waffle place for breakfast. I also went with her to take small gifts to the elderly. Mother never placed herself in that "elderly" category. Those special visits are very precious in my book of memories.

I arrived at Dallas to be met by Marcia and family but without my luggage. Fortunately, the airlines were very good about delivering the goods and the suitcases arrived within twenty-four hours. I attended worship with Marcia and Lee; they had a lively worship, in some ways like the African meetings. I am from another generation and uncomfortable with hand clapping and swinging and swaying. I find that it distracts from the thought of the hymns. They did sing some more traditional songs like "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name" and I enjoyed that. Marcia and I then drove to Bartlesville and she and

the children spent several days with Mother and me.

My sister Shirley and I went with Mother to Green County Retirement Home and ate dinner with the Richardsons, friends of Shirley. The complex was beautiful but did not appeal to Mother. She had a nice girl from the Wesleyan College staying with her for the winter.

I helped Marcia move some household items and put them away in their “new” house before going north to Oklahoma. The children were charming, of course. Rachel was small and loved to be cuddled. Matthew could charm his grandmother, too, but he was somewhat reluctant about showing affection — he just did his duty in that respect!

A sad message came while I was in the states. Michelle Legg died of cancer at age 30. Her parents had worked with us in Zimbabwe and her mother, Rose Marie, died there. We did not manage to attend the funeral but Mother and I drove to her grandparents’ home north of Vinita and visited with them.

While I was in the Dallas area, Marcia and I visited Debbie and Gary Oliver at a rehabilitation center. Debbie is the daughter of Scott and Mary Mitchell and is Loy’s niece. Mary was there with them as she had been since Debbie and Gary’s terrible accident in Alabama weeks earlier. Gary had been in a coma for a long time and it was thought that he would not survive. They still had a long road to recovery. We were inspired by their patience and faith.

On the Road Again

On arriving back in Zimbabwe, I was met by Loy and taken home; he left the next day to attend Nhowe Mission’s 50th anniversary. I had a temporary illness and was unable to go. There was hardly time to catch our breath when we again packed our bags and drove to South Africa for the lectureship. With us were Raymond Grottis, Mencho Zlatab, and the Palmers.

At the lectures we heard Richard Rogers, Charles Hodge, Leonard Grey, and Dan Cooper. From the old Rhodesian days came Dick Van Dyke, Darrol and Jo Ann Wright, Fred and Aquila Wide, Wilfred Crewe, Tom and Dodo Brown, David Brown, Jean and

Donald Lambert and children.

When we arrived back in Mutare there was a lovely floral arrangement welcoming me home. It came from the 7th Avenue church. Andrina Eeson invited us to eat lunch with her family.

Four little neighbor boys came by with a welcome note and a little fish floating in a plastic bowl of murky water. The bowl was cut from a bleach bottle. That kind of gift is more beautiful than jewels. The fish had a short life, sad to say.

Good news arrived that Nancy and Bobby had been granted a work permit to work with us in Zimbabwe.

The land was crying out for rain as we drove through the Ruwani area on Sunday. I felt like crying, too, as I saw goats searching for food; they had eaten all the grass, most of the trees had been cut, and the land was eroded. I marveled at Loy's skill in staying out of the washed out holes as he drove. There were some new thatch roofs but we also saw a load of thatch grass on the roof rack of a bus, indicating that people in the area were having to bring grass in from somewhere else, possibly from commercial farms which had conserved more wooded areas.

It was hard to believe that, just days before that trip to Ruwani, I was sailing down the Grand River in Oklahoma with my sisters and brothers. It was lovely as we watched pelicans coming in, a deer drinking from the river, lovely cabins and fine homes along the shore with the fall colors just beginning to show on the hillsides. It made a lovely sunset ending to my visit.

However, back in Zimbabwe, as I joined Loy in our work we observed, "It's so good to be together again!"

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians about his daily pressures and the concern for all the churches. We thought of Paul as we received letters daily, reporting on the work of various churches and telling of the difficulties some were having. Loy spent endless hours answering letters and sending out tracts, literature, and Bibles in order to help preachers and other leaders develop a strong teaching program.

One need was fulfilled when Loy reported that Mathias Chikafa needed assistance and Bob and Karen Harmon agreed to send him a monthly check. (Karen is my sister.)

Kids in Church

Just in case the sermon became boring (it didn't with Loy Mitchell preaching), we could watch the kids, i. e., baby goats, in a cage made of sticks of wood and strips of bark and covered with grass. We sat on a big slab of rock, the men on one side, the women on the other, and the children gathered down in the dirt. The cattle kraal was nearby, but the herd boys had taken the cattle out to search for grass or leaves. Another shelter had been built for eating — a fellowship room — and the cooking fires were burning with sadza, meat, and rice. Felix Bowa had started the congregation; he was another graduate of Mutare Bible School and had moved to Nyanga area to work with Todd Mazambani and the Ruziwa brothers. Bowa's wife gave us woven sisal mats and a basket that she had made; they were struggling to generate income and the craft work was her contribution.

Sometimes we forget how small some people's world is compared with ours to travel, read, and watch television. When I taught the Sakubva ladies' class following my trip to the States, they rebuked me for failing to tell them a story about my trip. They reminded me that I had told them about my journey the previous year. Perhaps I had not realized how interesting it sounded to them, so I shared my experiences once more.

Our visitors for 1991 kept coming: Roger and Martha Dickson came from Cape Town to preach and teach. They are dedicated missionaries and are always excited about their work. Roger worked with the International Bible Correspondence Course, which he wrote; it is a good advanced study following various other courses offered. They were from Hutchinson, Kansas, so we felt a bond with them.

Excitement mounted as we looked forward to the coming of Bobby and Nancy Wheat when we found them a house to rent in Greenside, not far from Bordervale, where we lived.

Nicodemus John Booker Mutuma died in December. Mutuma was one of the first people we knew at Nhowe Mission where he was a teacher in the primary school and a preacher. I wrote about the Mutuma family in *Among the People of the Sun*. He will be long

remembered. He had requested that Loy speak at his funeral; it is customary for any number of people to speak at a funeral. However, we were not able to go to Harare for the memorial; instead we took the Palmers the following week and expressed our sympathy to Mai Mutuma. They were a happy couple, often demonstrating their devotion to one another. Mai died a year or so later.

Just before Christmas, Judy and Fred Wood and their children came to us from Namwianga. On Christmas Day we ate goose and the trimmings with the Palmers, an English woman, and a Bulgarian man. The goose came from Olviry and Mike McCarthy, Marjie's parents.

Looking back at the visitors during the year and the anticipated arrival of the Wheat family, is it any wonder we decided to add two rooms and a bath to our house?

As the year closed we talked as if we were meteorologists, studying the skies, and wondering if and when the rains would come. Water was turned off part of each day, so we had to save some in containers while the water ran. We were very careful with water usage. When we visited the church at Aberfoyle, we stopped to see a family who had lost a child to malnutrition. Zimbabwe began to import maize from South Africa.

We purchased a small television-video set which would show tapes from the States. We had several Bible study tapes and began to show them to neighborhood children. We also enjoyed some recreational viewing; my brother Rudy gave us "The Sound of Music" and "Anne of Green Gables", and friends, especially Minnie Lois and Russell Neal, sent sports tapes which Loy thoroughly enjoyed. He needed the relaxation that it gave him; he would watch a short segment before bedtime and didn't mind if he already knew which team had won the game.

It was a good year, a very full year. God is good.

CHAPTER 2

THE YEAR THE WHEATS CAME 1992

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, Amen” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV)

On the 4th of February, the Wheats landed at Jan Smuts Airport near Johannesburg, South Africa.

We had driven to South Africa and stayed overnight at the Fiesta Park Hotel along the road and continued on to Johannesburg the next day. Their plane arrived from Paris. We watched passengers enter from the customs/immigration hall and were beginning to wonder if they were on the flight when a young man walked over to us and said, “Are you looking for Bobby and Nancy?” He was a Pentecostal missionary, Robert Foos, who had traveled with them from Dallas. And to top it all, he was coming to Mutare to begin working with an ACE school. Robert became a good friend of our families during his term of work in Mutare.

The Wheats straggled out a few minutes later, and we loaded them and their luggage into our truck. At Nancy’s request, we stopped at a tea room for meat pies and tea, then drove to the Lamberts’ house where Jean and Nancy had a sweet reunion and the children got acquainted with one another in the swimming pool. In fact, we were careless; in a short time fair, red-headed Ian had acquired severe sunburn, not being used to the African sun rays.

Loy and Bobby spent the next day going nonstop around the towns purchasing an Isuzu truck (like ours), a used Toyota Corolla for Nancy, and a 1981 Peugeot sedan for Cleopas Bamu. About midday on Thursday we finally headed out of the Johannesburg area in convoy; I drove the Peugeot, Loy drove our truck loaded down with an offset press bought by Roy Palmer, and the Wheats drove their two vehicles.

We spent the night under thatch at the Fiesta Motel, got to Beit Bridge in the afternoon and spent one hour with South African officials and three hours with Zimbabwe customs. I took our truck through the border because it required less paper work and booked rooms for us at Peter's Motel. We drove into Mutare the following day, seven weary people. It was fun, though; the children took turns riding with each of us; my only fear when we left a station was that we might leave a child behind thinking he was with someone else. Stefanie, Chris, and Ian were too alert to allow us to do that.

Jaxie Palmer, doing what she enjoys most, had a delicious meal for us when we arrived. The following day was Sunday and Bobby spoke in town. Irene and Dave Meikle gave us a lovely lunch; it was a joyful time.

Our home was a hive of activity. The new rooms were going up, the neighbor children were playing with our grandchildren, and a carpenter's foot came through the ceiling while ladies' Bible study was being held in our living room. The Wheats were sleeping in the rented house and taking meals with us and Nancy started home schooling the children.

Just before the arrival of the children we attended the annual lectureship at Avondale; its theme was "Families in Crisis". We were well into the school term, teaching at the Bible School, teaching home studies, and teaching scripture classes at Hillcrest schools. Loy reported 37 conversions in the area, according to preachers, teachers, and our own records.

The drought continued and 1992 was the worst on record. In February we were told that Mutare's dams would be dry in two months if no rains came. God was hearing more prayers than usual. My hairdresser said, "Why don't churches have a day of prayer?" I replied, "That would be great but, you know, we are praying daily for rain". Posters appeared in shop windows saying "Pray for rain!"

An Evaluation: A Look Back in Time

It had been 34 years since we arrived in Africa. We left the United States on March 5th, 1958, with Stanley, age one year and nine months. We spent four years at Nhowe Mission near Macheke

and returned to the States in March of 1962. After two years working with the church at Rotan, Texas, and doing graduate work at Abilene Christian University, we returned to Nhowe for almost a year before moving to Mutare in August of 1965.

We spent the next 11 years in Umtali trying to make known the gospel of Christ. By this time our family had grown to four children with the birth of Nancy in 1959, Marcia in 1962, and William in 1965.

Late in November of 1976, we returned to the United States and spent eight years working with the church in Odessa, Texas. Then in November of 1985, we moved back to Mutare to resume our work, minus the children.

After returning in 1985, we had the special blessing of working with three of our four children. William worked with us for three months in 1986. Stanley and his wife, Marjie, worked with us for three years, and Nancy and Bobby were now helping with the Mutare/ Manicaland work. (They had previously worked in Zimbabwe in the 80's.)

We had been involved in the village preaching, teaching in schools, home Bible studies, Bible correspondence courses, and preachers' training school. Loy reiterated that, while all the methods had been effective, the work of training men to preach to their own people was the greatest long-term effort. All over Zimbabwe we were finding Bible school graduates serving as elders, preachers, teachers, and church leaders. Those people knew the language and culture of the land, which is necessary in planting strong churches.

The Hillcrest church in Abilene, Texas, had helped the Bible school for 30 years. During our first four years we were under the oversight of the church in Lawrence, Kansas, but many small churches and individuals helped as well. The 37th Street church in Snyder, Texas, and Eisenhower church in Odessa, Texas, were helping us in 1992. The Snyder church had helped us since 1964. Others helped, including a fine church in Knott, Texas. (The above came from Loy's March 1992 summary.)

The Troups Arrive

As if to help us celebrate our 23 years in Africa, Rhinard and Betty Troup came to visit us. They had worked for ten years at

Nhowe and Mutare in the 60's and 70's, and we rejoiced in their return and reunion with many people whom they had known and loved. They were also pleased that they remembered the language as well as they did, and of course the Shona people were delighted to hear them speak their mother tongue.

The Wheats' container of goods arrived at the railway depot, and Bobby had to go down to witness the opening and unloading of the container. It was exciting to open the boxes of goods which had been shipped three months previously; the missionary always feels a little more at home when familiar items appear.

Water was still rationed. Betty Troup commented that I did a good job of recycling water. "You can make a bowl of water stretch as far as Jaxie Palmer can make a roast beef stretch!" she said. (We marveled at Jaxie's thin slices of delicious juicy roast. That was just one of the means of making limited funds go far enough to feed a large family and visitors.)

We enjoyed tea and talk beneath the thatched pagoda at our house. The view was beautiful and we usually had a cool breeze there. One day an American couple came by for a visit; they were from El Paso and Chicago and were advising the railway people. They seemed to enjoy being with us, the Troups, and the Wheats. One's own countrymen are special in a foreign land.

A Harding University student, Chris, was taking leave to study a few months at South African Bible School. He came to Mutare to work with us for a while. He was from Colorado and liked to play John Denver tapes; we began to call him "Big Chris" because of our little Chris. Chris had been unfaithful to the Lord for some time, and, having returned to serve his God, was filled with zeal and determination. Our Ian had red hair, like Big Chris, and became his shadow. Big Chris wore his hair in a crew cut and Ian wanted his cut like that. How much we influence the little ones!

In April Loy noted that life was slow in the villages. He had been to Magunje where he taught a class and then preached a 35-minute sermon. He had finished by 12:10. Then the Lord's Supper and collection took another 35 minutes and the announcements took over

an hour. They were announcements with commentaries. Sunday is a special day for village people and having walked a long way to get there, they were not in a hurry to leave.

Drought

President Mugabe declared the drought a national disaster. Cattle were dying and the old and young people were not receiving sufficient nourishment. When people heard that a store had “upfu” (corn meal) or sugar or cooking oil, long lines quickly formed. Police often had to be called out to prevent people from stealing from the trucks arriving with the food stuffs. “The Big Flush” concerned a rather delicate but very real problem in Zimbabwe. Bulawayo people had been told to flush their toilets in unison at 7 A. M. and 9 P.M. daily in order to clear some of their sewage problems. We recycled water, using bath and laundry water for flushing toilets, washing cars, and rationing a few drops about the rose bushes. An ingenious company produced a foam spray to use in unpleasant toilet bowls. People in high density (crowded) areas were complaining of stench and inconvenience; cholera and other diseases began to appear.

Dave Meikle, who employed many people on his farm and housed their families, reported that as many as 1,000 people were coming for food each day in addition to his own people. We had breakfast one morning with Joan Meikle and watched the staff as they distributed food. We assisted her with some of the funds we were receiving from the states.

The basic cause for the water shortage was, of course, the drought, but it was observed that by better planning, the governing authorities might have prevented some of the difficulty. Population growth had far outgrown the provision for water, i.e., building of more dams and conservation education. An amusing poem appeared in the “Manica Post” when the city council had gathered with councils from all over the land in a resort area; they were housed in luxury and the expense of the conference was unbelievable.

All in Kariba

John Allcock

There ain't any water, dear Liza, dear Liza,
There ain't any water, dear Liza,
In the tap.

Well, fetch some, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Well, fetch some, dear Henry,
From the dam.

The dam has gone dry, dear Liza, dear Liza,
The dam has gone dry, dear Liza,
Quite dry.

Well, go to the Mutare City Council, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Well, go to the Council, dear Henry,
It's their job.

They are all in Kariba, dear Liza, dear Liza,
They are all in Kariba, dear Liza,
On a jaunt.

And who is paying for this, dear Henry, dear Henry,
And who is paying for this, dear Henry,
Who pays?

Why, we do, dear Liza, dear Liza,
Why, we, dear Liza,
With the rates.

But why do we stand it, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Why do we stand it and let it go on?

There is a hole in our heads, dear Liza, dear Liza,
There is a hole in our heads, dear Liza,
A hole!

American Christians began to send contributions for drought relief; we spent many hours helping local Christians purchase and distribute food, especially in the rural areas. One day, Cleopas Bamu, who worked for Blue Ribbon Foods, stopped by and shared our meal under the pagoda; he told of a family at Mambondiani who needed help. The man was blind and the family had no crops for two years. We gave Bamu money to purchase mealie meal and dry fish from his company.

As usual, I was concerned about Loy's work load but was helpless to do anything about it, and he was happy that way. We had four Mutare young people attending Southern Africa Bible School, and since they could not get bookings on the train and could not afford to fly that holiday, Loy took them back to Benoni, a 12-14 hour drive from Mutare, slept a short night there, and returned the following day.

Rhinard Troup spoke for a week at 7th Avenue and Betty taught several women's classes, in addition to speaking at the annual women's lectureship at Nhowe Mission.

We spent four great days at Gwaai River with the Troups and Wheats. Rhinard videotaped as he moved about and we have a very good tape as a result, showing the work of the church, scenery, and wild animals. Chris and I became rather disturbed at one elephant encounter, and I recalled when Stanley was very small he moved to the floor when an elephant got our scent and began to flap his ears and trumpet.

Our friendly Nancy soon discovered old classmates and met new people around town. Sometimes when I met someone they remarked, "Oh, you're Nancy Wheat's mother!" My claim to fame!

Errol and Wendy Williams, who had worked with the town congregation for more than fifteen years, moved to Cape Town in 1992. We were sorry to see them leave and missed them a lot. Errol first worked in Cape Town with a paint company but eventually began work with the Central church there.

Nancy and Bobby moved into the "manse" or house owned by the church which the Williams family had occupied. Henceforth that house seemed to be open all the time and I often stopped by after classes at "Nancy's tea room". Often I would find her old friend and neighbor, Fiona McKenzie Payne, talking of old times and present lives with their young families.

Again, we had an American short term apprentice; this time it was Mark Simon from Freed- Hardeman University. Mark was a very good worker, willing to go anywhere, and do anything asked of him. He was also very good with the children. One day I noticed that he handed Ian the jam jar after he had worked the lid and loosened it; Ian was made to think he had opened it by his own strength.

Once or twice a month we received boxes of used clothing to be distributed to the needy. The Wheat children soon learned that the box coming from Beth and Steve Walker contained little surprises throughout: toys, books, staplers, pencils, and games. Once Beth learned that our grandchildren were there, she sometimes included a good video tape. Beth and Steve were doctors and young parents; we thought they were very special people to take time to pack boxes, go to garage sales, and make the boxes exciting to open. I believe their two young sons enjoyed helping, too.

In June we went to Kotwa for two days. We slept in the back of the truck and on the floor. Later we spent four days in Kwe Kwe with five other preachers. During the day we divided into couples and moved from house to house, asking if we could read a scripture, have a song, and pray. We also passed out thousands of tracts and enrolled people in the Bible correspondence courses. Then on the 1st of July, we drove to Zambia's Namwianga Mission for their lectureship.

The Tonga people of Namwianga Mission packed into the building for lectures. Their singing was beautiful; their women's voices seemed to be softer than our Shona women's voices. The weather was cold; we shivered one night as we sat in the assembly, then noticed that a young mother sat next to us, bare footed with only a shabby jersey for warmth, and the child had very little covering. However, she sang with great fervor.

On the journey to Namwianga we stopped over night at the Gwaai River Hotel and took a drive in the game park. Paul Chimhungwe and Mai Tsigwa were along and Mai Tsigwa collected a bag of elephant dung which she claimed helped clear the sinuses when she had a cold. I will just use Vicks Vaporub since I have the means to purchase it. Mai Tsigwa took Zimbabwean soap to barter because she heard the Zambians could not buy soap or detergent. She also asked to stop at the Livingstone flea market to purchase ethnic fabric; I thought our Zimbabwe fabric was just as good if not better, but some think imports are better.

Back in Zimbabwe the Wheats were carrying on the work of God which also included training their children in His way. Nancy

was teaching Stefanie and Christopher and they were doing well; they were learning scripture along with their school work, and I was very pleased to see the results when I taught them Bible classes. Nancy had a benign lymphoma removed in a small private hospital in Mutare and Christopher had to spend some time there with asthma attacks. Once I had to take him to the emergency room while he was having an attack, and this was frightening to me. Fortunately, he was referred to Dr. Pfumajena, an internist, who changed some of his treatment and while he had to continue to take medication and use inhalers, Chris' health improved, thank God. Ian played with little Norman Muza on the church property while the older children did their school work. All three children were taking tennis and piano lessons; Stefanie took ballet for a year which gave her poise and confidence.

USA Jaunt

We unexpectedly spent a night in a lovely Lisbon hotel on our way to the States in July. We were taken there following several hours of frustration and delays. Knowing we would not arrive at the scheduled time we sought to phone Marcia in Dallas, but could not get money exchanged. A very congenial couple from the States, with whom we had been visiting, paid with their credit card. We have exchanged a Christmas card and notes since that meeting; perhaps we shall meet them again some time.

We had a very delightful trip to Oregon with Terrel and Charlotte Taylor. Terrel is my brother, about two years younger than I. We saw Colorado, Idaho, and Wyoming as well as Oregon, and Terrel and Charlotte spent several days in Washington where Terrel's company was building two houses. We had hoped to return via California and visit with Stanley's family but that could not be. I was teased by my traveling companions (well, the men, to be exact) for asking where we would stop and eat next. I am not sure where they got such an idea; in any case a housewife is programmed to start planning the next meal soon after finishing the present one, and that's basically what I am, a home keeper.

In Oregon we stayed with Scott and Mary in Linwood and Loy

spoke through the week for the Linwood church. Scott is Loy's next younger brother. I spoke to the ladies class and was pleased to have an old friend from Central Christian days, Lois McCord, in the class. Lois was the beautiful wife of Hugo McCord and both have been wonderful role models for us.

In August we went to Kansas for the Mitchell reunion. All nine brothers and sisters were present and a number of grandchildren came as well. Our Marcia was the only one from our family who attended. We traveled many miles during that trip. I went home to spend some quality time with Mother while Loy spoke in Missouri and Arkansas.

Again we flew Air Portugal and stopped all day in Lisbon. This time we were met by Carlos Esteves and we spent the day with him as well as with Manuel and Pam De Oliveira. We knew the De Oliveiras from visits to South Africa. He was planning to return to Africa and work in Mozambique and South Africa.

We hardly slowed down, arriving home on the 26th, meeting with the 7th Avenue church on the 27th and driving to the lectureship on the 28th. The Wheats had gone earlier; it was good to have them with us again. Loy spoke about "Grace".

Back home again, the Mutare Bible School field program ended with one hundred thirty-eight people baptized. Water rationing became more stringent; for a while there was no electricity during the day because the country did not have enough generating capacity to supply the need. We saw sand dunes in places and the children in Mozambique were dying of starvation. Even bus companies were suffering because people could not afford to ride. We talked with women from Mombondiani church who had walked to Maruru ladies' fellowship, starting at 3:00 A.M. and arriving at 10:00. They said they were tired for a week. Not being able to afford the bus fare did not keep them from enjoying fellowship and Bible study!

A newspaper photographer captured a sweet picture of children digging up termites; they would be eaten with sadza, said the reporter. Another newspaper photo showed a man on a bicycle pulling a cart with a woman and child who had been in a clinic. The man charged \$4 to take patients seven kilometers but an ambulance would have been far more expensive, had it been available.

Memories

While being involved in the work in Africa, I still found a few minutes to reminisce and recall our trip to the States. So much has happened in the past two months or so; I have images in my mind of the many experiences and will relate a few of them.

Marcia and the children meeting us and little Rachel's cry of "maw-maw!" My mother's house on Yorman road closed up and looking sad, but Mother was settled happily in a retirement apartment. Driving west with Terrel and Charlotte, talking, laughing, remembering, crying, sharing motel rooms, seeing new country (for me), wondering at the beauty of the American Northwest. Seeing Hugo and Lois McCord in Portland, recalling the Central Christian days. Scott and Loy together in a gospel meeting; Scott and Mary's neighbors coming to the meeting. Linwood's love and concern toward us, taking a collection to pay our dental bills!

At the Mitchell reunion, seeing Aunt Mabel and Aunt Lola recalling their childhood memories. Gary and Debbie's testimony of great faith gained through their terrific sufferings. Conversion stories with some cries from the heart. "Seeing My Father in Me" (Paul Overstreet) tape and photos of the Mitchell offspring. Traveling with Marcia and the children. Being guided to the church in Green River, Wyoming, by a policeman.

Our visit with the William Mitchells in College Station, seeing Aggieland for the first time. Attending ninety-five-year-old Martha Beddo's funeral while we were in Snyder; she was Dot Wolfe's mother and used to call us "the kids" when we stayed with Dot while on leave from Africa. Sweet fellowship and tears with Christians in Snyder. Melinda Wheat beaming as she wore her Zimbabwe shirt. Glenn and Betty Wheat each slipping me money to "buy something for our grandchildren". Grand welcome in Odessa. Seeing Karen and William meet with the 80's reunion of young people.

More reunions with Palmers (back in Abilene after two years in Mutare), Brights, Hillcrest people, Rotan church, Godwins, viewing Zimbabwe video tape with Gilliams. Seeing the interest

of young university students at Northeastern Louisiana, Freed-Hardeman, and Harding Universities. Sitting in chapel at Freed-Hardeman with Betty and Rhinard Troup. Excited churches in Detroit. Peaceful time with Harold and Dianne Mitchell in southern Iowa. Walking at night with Eleanor and Kelly Hamby as we talked of Africa.

Special time with the Markens of Wilmington church. Staying with Mother. Looking over Grand Lake while having fun with the Taylor family. Dallas Zoo with the Redd children, eating hot dogs in the park, seeing Zimbabwe Rhinos there. Speaking briefly by phone before we departed.

Loy's cowboy boots stolen at the Lisbon Airport! They also had my skirt and other items of clothing stuffed inside.

Arriving home tired, leaving again for South Africa. SABS Lectures, fabulous singing, hearing Jack Exum, Loy Mitchell, and other great preachers. Seeing loved ones again, driving home, seeing the devastation from overgrazing and drought, especially in resettlement areas in Chisumbanji. Welcome home from our family. Still in need of prayers for rain.

Celebrations were in the air as Nancy and Bobby planned a surprise birthday party for Loy as he turned 60 on the November 20. About 30 people came to The Wise Owl Restaurant to help him celebrate. Nancy and Stefanie sang "Daddy's Hands" and Bobby gave a tribute to his father-in-law.

We also hosted some American missionaries on the Saturday following Thanksgiving Day; Thursday was a work day in Zimbabwe. We even viewed a football video tape sent by friends, the Russell Neals of Odessa.

On my birthday, just a coincidence, we had our annual spaghetti dinner for the Bible school graduates. Then with grandchildren around to help, we dusted off the Christmas tree and other decorations and our house began to look a lot like Christmas.

I bought Loy an office chair for his birthday. A couple of days later I walked into my study and saw his chair, I thought. I said, "Didn't you like your chair"? He replied, "That's your chair". He had bought me a matching one; what a sweet thought.

Family Scrapbook

Our children are precious gifts and their little notes and gestures mean much to us. In my file are birthday cards and notes that I cannot part with. Following are some examples.

Dearest Mom,

This song expresses how I feel about our relationship. I would sing it to you but we couldn't make it through.

“You Are the Wind Beneath My Wings”

It must have been cold there in my shadow,
To never have sunlight on your face.
You were content to let ME shine.
You always walked a step behind.
So I was the one with all the glory,
while you were the one with all the strain.
A beautiful face without a name,
A beautiful smile that hides the pain.
Did you ever know that you are my hero,
And everything I would like to be?
I can fly higher than an eagle
Because YOU are the wind beneath my wings.
It might have appeared to go unnoticed,
But I've got it all here in my heart.
I want you to know I know the truth,
I would be nothing without you.

You have always been and still are my best ally, friend, and confidant, the best Mom. I love you and thank God always for you. Nancy

On our 1991 anniversary Marcia wrote:

MOM, I REMEMBER WHEN:

- * You and Daddy gave me that three-wheel tricycle for my 4th birthday!
- * When you took care of my head after Margot had thrown a brick at me.

- * When I was sure I spent a whole day in my room (ha) for ripping Margot's dress (She had my guara!).
- * When I cried so hard in Bartlesville at Aunt Charlotte's house for you to come get me (I was 7). I remember feeling so good when I heard your sweet voice on the phone.
- * When you walked in after Nancy had performed surgery on my hair!
- * You brought me my first real doll — a sort of Barbie — I cried when I left it in the hotel at Hot Springs. Every time we would go back I looked for that doll in the drawer!
- * You brought me my second new doll from your visit to the States in 1971 . . . a beautiful floppy doll which I played with for hours (with Corrine).
- * I remember the excitement and relief when you and Daddy returned from that loooong trip!
- * I remember how you showed us how to play with buttons... developing whole cities in the dining room on the floor. We always just got it set up and it was time for bed!
- * I remember dressing up with your pretty hats (I can still see your hat box!).
- * I remember your bright yellow dress Daddy bought you (Fairbridge colors, our house colors at Junior School).
- * I remember when you walked into the Infectious Diseases Hospital when I had been sick with scarlet fever. I was so happy! You brought me pink shorty pajamas.
- * I remember so many great times in Odessa...you were my best friend there...shopping...cooking...Sunday meals after church...Wednesday evening youth Bible study at our house.
- * When we found my wedding dress!
- * When I suspected I was pregnant in Bartlesville...I was so sleepy...when YOU suspected. I should say!
- * When you came to visit and see Matthew last year!

I love you, Mom!

Marcia

DADDY, I REMEMBER WHEN:

- * You taught me to ride that old faithful two-wheeler in our front yard at Taylor Avenue.
- * All the picnics we used to take as a family (and whoever else would come) and of course Pirate... Cloudlands, Lake Alexander.
- * I remember trying to run up a tree at Cloudlands like you did so well.
- * I remember being “almost” thrown over a cliff and waterfalls in Inyanga.
- * I remember singing in the car on trips, devotional songs and also crazy songs.
- * I still love to sing “I went down to Grandpa’s Farm” and I make up songs like someone I know.
- * I remember a crow...and a cat.
- * I remember our daily devotions especially ones at Taylor Avenue with stories, memory verses, and lots of singing.
- * I remember waking up to your reading the Bible out loud.
- * I remember you used to walk me home from school at St. David’s ...yes, I remember tripping over...who was it?... Debbie Burden or Sally Budd?
- * I remember you laughing.
- * I remember you and Grandpa Mitchell laughing at William and me when we slid down the icy sidewalk in Kansas in 1969 — what a weird feeling!
- * I remember us all camping at Aberfoyle, playing amongst the tea bushes and swimming and bathing in the cold river.
- * Holidays to Beira (all that tar), to South Africa.
- * Unloading crates from Africa in Odessa, finally on a horribly windy day! Home again.
- * The great trip four of us made back to Zimbabwe in 1978 and then one more time in 1982. High point of my life.

- * How sweetly you listened that final weekend Lee and I broke up.
- * How excited you were for Lee and me when we announced our marriage-to-be.
- * Your joy with us over Matthew.

I love you, Daddy!

Marcia

Marcia sent a card with a special message:

There is no greater gift in life
Than the love our parents give.
It's a wonderful example
Of the way we should live.
It helps us trust in others,
To be kind and show concern,
For the love our parents give
Helps us love others in return.

William continued his studies at Texas A and M, his assistantship to a professor, and his taking business trips with Karen to Los Angeles, San Angelo, Tampa, Galveston, and other places.

William's letters often mentioned news reports he had seen or read concerning Africa. In November he flew to Atlanta to present a paper at a political science conference; Karen went along. The two of them shared interests and were best friends as well as husband and wife, as it should be. How we enjoyed sharing our children's experiences through their letters and calls.

Stanley's letter reported his great interest in the restoration movement and earlier church history, i. e., the Anabaptist movement in Germany during Luther's time. Stanley, Marjie, and Tracy were experiencing ice and snow in the mountain town of Frazier Park where Stanley preached. "Snow Bunnies" arrived from the city and often someone got lost on the mountain slopes. During the Gulf War, Stan commented that perhaps President Bush was not a wimp after all. Stan had passed demonstrators and counter demonstrators about the conflict in the East. Stan also made the news when the area had floods and he and others filled sand bags and placed them where the church building could be protected.

Stanley was teaching a course on the Book of Revelation at the Buena Park School of Preaching and New Testament Introduction in the Pepperdine Extension program, while enjoying the excitement of watching a toddler learn to speak, make friends with the church and townspeople, and generally thrill her parents. Tracy had given him chocolates for Valentine's Day and said, "Share, Daddy".

An anonymous donor had made it possible for Stan and his family to attend the Pepperdine Lectures and stay in a hotel nearby. Then in April he wrote that he had been interviewed by his prospective mentor at Fuller Theological University in Pasadena and looked forward to working on his PHD. He was honored as "Teacher of the Year" in the Southern California School of Evangelism. In May he commented on the terrible race riots in Los Angeles; he was teaching a class about five blocks from where the riots began.

Stanley's year-end letter indicated a great interest in his studies at Fuller, highlighted by lectures given by a Scotsman, I. Howard Marshall. Tracy and Marj had chicken pox after which Tracy announced to a church group that Daddy cooked soup every day! He had declined an offer to judge the Miss Fiesta Day competition in Frazier Park, and on a more serious note, he expressed concern over hermeneutics and the work of women in the church.

Marcia's letter during the year usually had little scribbles made by Rachel; her grandparents did not mind at all. Marcia was thoroughly engrossed in her homemaking, enjoying the children, the garden, her house, and hospitality. Matthew was enrolled in the local kindergarten and Rachel could say her birthday was in July; she spoke with a strong Texas drawl. They had over 1,000 people attending their "Bring Your Neighbor" day. On her 31st birthday, Matthew gave her a first "Mom" mug. Matthew was into "telling jokes, like his dad".

In one letter Marcia expressed her deep desire to be with us and told of a dream. She thought she had traveled to Paris, on to Johannesburg, and then on to Mutare. I thought perhaps she had subconsciously put herself in one of her letter tapes about driving from South Africa to Mutare. She did not know whose car she was driving.

Marcia and Lee had become family group leaders in the church, meaning they led two Bible talks and then more when the first two grew larger. Lee had taken Marcia out on a surprise date, packing her bag and taking her overnight to a hotel with meals, pool, and other luxuries. How romantic!

An interesting comment came from Marcia: “Thank you for teaching us self-discipline and good housekeeping habits”. She and Lee had helped two couples clear their houses of an incredible amount of rubbish. There were layers of fast food paper containers. “Years of laziness and undisciplined lifestyle accumulate gross filth”! They felt that an orderly daily life would also help the people in their spiritual lives.

Those Grandchildren Again!

With each yearly summary I am recording “grand” incidents. Ian, age 4, loved to help his grandfather in the study. One day he wrote a letter to be posted; Loy took it away in his postbag but I think I know where it was posted. Ian announced that he could get anything he wanted by magical powers! Unfortunately, he could not recall the magic words. The children were fascinated with the monkeys, and Chris got excited when one took a banana from his hand. Later when monkeys began to play on the roof, they were not so cute.

Loy handed tracts to everyone he saw; he also threw them from the truck when we traveled and when the roads were clear of other traffic. They were always picked up and read and we often received responses through the mail. Ian helped his grandfather fold the tracts. One day while in the Jowo area, we ran out of tracts. Four-year-old Ian began to “write” his own and hand them out. I hoped he would keep his missionary spirit. Marcia wrote that little Rachel was making animal sounds like her grandfather and saying words like “quirrel” (squirrel). Matthew had asked about belly buttons and why people are different. After Marcia’s explanation about birth and navels, he came to his mother and said, “Mom, that really hurt when the doctor cut my belly button! He shouldn’t have cut it!” The children had been catching frogs, and Marcia remarked that it was

hard to believe that she used to catch frogs near the church building at 7th Avenue in Umtali (Mutare).

The Palmers' Departure

As I wrote earlier, Roy and Jaxie Palmer returned to the States in 1992. Roy's health was failing, and he needed to see his Abilene doctors. We missed them; we were thankful that they were able to spend two years with us. After all, many people their age had retired and were relaxing. In February of 1993 Roy had triple bypass surgery and was making good recovery.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY, OBSERVE, TEACH 1993

“For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (Ezra 7:10, NIV).

Loy’s newsletter quoted the above scripture and stated that, God being our helper, it would be our goal in the coming year.

Another year, another beginning—could we possibly have more activity than we had in 1992? It is a blessing that God does not reveal the future to us. Rains had fallen and the people of the land were optimistic, but drought relief had to continue until crops could be planted and harvested.

On the 18th of January we celebrated Nancy’s 34th birthday. Our “Nancy with the laughing eyes” continued to be a great joy to us; it was wonderful to have her with us. She and her family came for tea and cake and stayed for the evening. She and Bobby continued to celebrate by spending two nights at Nyanga while we kept the grandchildren.

Loy continued to make trips to South Africa to buy trucks from time to time. Luckily for me, others were driving now. I had to have a heel spur injected and the upper spine manipulated under general anesthetic. Lifting buckets of water for recycling aggravated the back ailment. Soon I taught our worker, Onias, to use the washing machine and take over the lifting tasks.

Looking back at the Christmas holidays, we had sweet memories of telephone calls from our children. William called from Texas; they were staying with Karen’s people for Christmas and enjoying the Subletts’ first grandchild; Karen’s sister Jill had a baby boy. We talked with Stanley and Tracy; Stanley continued to preach at Frazier Park and study at Fuller Theological Seminary. Then on New Year’s Day a call came from Mississippi where Marcia and Lee were visiting with Lee’s family; the children told us what they had received our gifts and thanked us for them. Joy!

All three of Loy's sisters and their husbands celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries within a year's time. We watched "Winds of War" and thought of those three couples and others who married during World War II.

The 7th Avenue church hosted the annual lectureship in January of 1993 and lessons were given on "Church Growth". Loy began classes in Daniel, Zechariah, and Church Leadership at Mutare Bible School. I started English classes for first- and second-year students. My home study with Catherine Sithole brought fruit when she became a Christian. Catherine was a home care nurse and had cared for Agnes Grottis until Agnes died. Catherine accompanied Agnes to church and thus her teaching began. In the Mutare area, 48 baptisms were recorded.

Agnes Grottis was a delight to know. She was an Indian; her parents had immigrated from Asia and she was born in Zimbabwe. She had married and borne eleven children. One son, Ray, and his family were members of the local church. Agnes studied with us awhile and decided to worship with us; her family had been Catholic but in her adulthood, her children had gone several directions religiously. She was definitely the matriarch of the family, loved, and respected; she lived with one of her sons. She was crippled with rheumatoid arthritis and came to church in a wheel chair. She died in March and the funeral was probably the largest held at 7th Avenue; people stood outside. Several family members, including two daughters-in-law, spoke at the service. The colored community provided food for the family with many Indian dishes. I sent cinnamon rolls to the family in the evening and was asked for the recipe for that good old American treat.

One day while I was teaching about paragraphs in my second-year class at the Bible School, we had to stop because of a noisy battle on the side of the mountain. No, the war had not started again; it was a very large troop of baboons having their own war. When peace finally reigned and only a few monkeys played in the trees, I asked my class to write a paragraph about the incident. Most of them thought the baboons were fighting over scorpions, which they love to eat, and because the younger creatures had captured scorpions and failed to give them to their elders, the elders had to discipline

them. Their account reminded me of the many fables that Africans use to teach their young. Traditionally an old person tells stories as the children sit around the fire at night.

In February Andrew Bamu died of a brain tumor. He had attended the Bible School and teachers' training school here and had been headmaster at Nhowe Mission for several years. He left a wife and five children; brothers are responsible for the families of the dead brother, and it fell to Cleopas Bamu to take care of the family. It is a big responsibility and especially in this day and age. In the old days, a brother living in the same village took over the family and often married the widow in order to care for her. She was made a second class wife if the brother already had a wife or wives. In a Christian and more progressive society, some adjustments were being made.

Bernard Mackenzie, husband of Mary, one of the town church members, also died, and we heard with sadness of the death of Dr. Peter Wales who had been the best man at Stanley's wedding. Peter had been returning from a late night call and likely fell asleep and hit a tree. We felt close to death at that time because almost daily we heard of cholera and AIDS-related deaths. There was much suffering in the land and it had been complicated by drought.

We received a brief report from Stanley that he had been hired as the preacher for the Glendale church in California. Their house was in Burbank, an adjoining city. And at home we were planning a seaside holiday with the Wheats. Ian said he was practicing building sand castles in the sand box.

I felt very close to Kansas as we watched "Sarah Plain and Tall" and read *Pioneer Women of Kansas* and *Prairie Earth*. The latter is about the Chase County area where Mother Mitchell was reared. In addition to that, the children were reading *Little House on the Prairie* and giving us reports on it.

My sister Shirley sent me magazines, which we shared with many women in Africa. They often described "gracious living" and we enjoyed looking at the pictures and reading of that other world. Then I thought of the meaning of gracious living and decided that we were seeing it demonstrated in the Shona community.

We met with the small church started by the Gwinya family near Hot Springs. They lived in two shabby rooms at the back of

a dilapidated old store building. When we arrived we were greeted with cultural courtesy, meaning we were escorted to the best place in the front room, Loy to sit on a bench and I on a reed mat. An old man was there eating bread and drinking tea; he had just come from the village and was hungry. The young daughter of the family served him from her knees with the greatest respect.

There was no furniture in the room apart from the bench, likely borrowed, but on the wall was an old shelf, and Mai Gwinya had proudly displayed some blue tin plates that had been given to her when she graduated from the Bible School. I asked her if she was happy and she beamed, “Yes, we are free!” Before they were converted and came to Mutare School three years before, Baba Gwinya was a drunkard and was about to take a second wife, according to the custom. Yes, they were indeed happy and free from the burden of sin. A small group met with them and stayed for sadza, rice, and a small amount of relish, i. e. meat, vegetables, and gravy, no doubt at great sacrifice to the family.

Loy and Bobby flew to Durban to get a bus arriving there for Nhowe Mission. At various times, they also brought trucks into the country and sold them at a profit. The truck sales helped to cover other expenses, including drought relief, and aided in the work of preaching and teaching. It appeared to be a lot of trouble and worry on top of all the other responsibilities that Loy had, but I believe he enjoyed the challenge it offered.

A businessman in South Africa was kind enough to lend us his house near the sea on the south coast. We spent five days on the Indian Ocean with Bobby, Nancy, and the children. We walked on the beach, waded in the ocean, and tried to ride the waves without much success. We helped the children build those sand castles Ian had been practicing for. We read, thought, and regained some strength and energy to go on with our work.

J. C. Choate visited us in March. He does a great work in missions, radio preaching, and printing books. Our workers use these books all over Zimbabwe; they are written in simple English and are for the most part very basic.

Witness Gomwe was a Bible school graduate supported by several Christians in Texas (Dot Wolfe, Charley and Dora Blakey,

Barbara Preston, and Elizabeth Leavell) in the work of following up World Bible School students. Those good people also provided funds for a motorcycle, which Loy purchased in South Africa and continued to help Gomwe maintain. Charles Msosa worked with local courses by grading lessons and teaching students. We had correspondence courses in the 60's and others had continued it, including our Stanley.

On the 13th, Independence Day in Zimbabwe, many soldiers returned from the Mozambique war. Our worker called it Mugabe's war! The men were happy to return home, but their future was uncertain because of the high rate of unemployment. There were incidents of killing in South Africa after the murder of Chris Hani, a Communist leader. Because of the trouble we were nervous about sending the local young people back to school in Benoni following their holiday break. Loy and Bobby took them, without incident, for which we thanked God.

Sometimes we have Christmas in April or any other month, and we are quite happy to accept any offerings. We received videotapes, cinnamon, and Snickers from the Terrel and Brent Taylors and Terri in Oklahoma. The children repeatedly watched "Beauty and the Beast"; Ian seemed to have all the songs memorized so he could sing along with Angela Lansbury and others.

We were spending two or three Sundays a month in various villages. In his report to churches in the States, Loy commented on four places in May. First was Jowo, one of the oldest churches, which nearly died during the Liberation War but was revived now. They had great faith and little material wealth. Next was Samuriwo; Charles Bukuta had worked there for sixteen months. When we visited, there were 108 people present, and four were baptized. Two years before, the congregation had only six members! At Chingwaru, Brother Gwande, a graduate of the Bible school, had quietly gone about the job of rebuilding the cause in that place. Over 100 met and four souls repented and were baptized.

Then Loy and Bobby spent two nights at Gokwe, sleeping in their pick-up trucks. The last 65 miles were over muddy roads, which required first and second gears on the pickups. There they had the official opening of their building, made of cement and

unfinished; there were windows but no panes. The people had done all the work on the building. After the service at the building, they also held a preaching service 18 miles away at Brother Nyarugwe's place. The men of the congregation had walked four and a half hours to the surrounding farms or villages, telling about the meetings and praying with the people.

Dwight Robarts and John Little from the Hillcrest church in Abilene came for a visit. On Sunday they went with us to meet with a small church at Nyanyadzi in a market shelter. A very tall youth stood up to help with the Lord's Supper; he was barefoot and his shabby trousers were just below his knees. Dwight, who is also very tall, was drawn to the youth, Musadaro Mwaseka, and began to send donations to help him return to school and write his O level exams. Dwight and Loy gave him some clothes and we helped him as he continued his education. We saw many poor people in our travels and a number of them, like that young lad, did not have money for school fees or clothing.

In Mutare, Dwight gave a lesson about the Ethiopian eunuch. He spoke first about the importance of families and how we all are part of families and share love in them. Then he pointed out that the eunuch had no family and no hope of one; also, he was probably not allowed to enter the temple in his quest for truth, but he had found a family in Christ. Young Dale Meikle was baptized by Bobby Wheat after Dwight's sermon; seeing the young blonde boy go up, I was reminded of our William, and also of our other children being baptized in the same place.

Who Cares?

"Inheriting a brother's wife after his death is common African tradition but with the advent of AIDS, the practice probably needs to be reviewed In some societies, so strong is the tradition that even in cases where it has been proved that the brother died of AIDS, society still expects the surviving brother to inherit his wife".

The above story from *The Herald* went on to describe the tragedy of a young man who took his dead brother's wife; the child of their union died, and three months later the mother died. Then the brother had AIDS, and not only that, he had to care for three

children from his brother's family. Such stories were becoming familiar; everywhere we traveled, we heard of the deaths of people in their 20's, 30's, and 40's. Grandparents often tried to care for the orphans, but other orphans still needed care. Who takes care of such children? We helped some individuals and people we knew who were taking care of AIDS orphans, but we could see the need for child care programs. Other religious and charitable organizations were beginning to establish care centers, and the government gave some help. It was a national tragedy and experts predicted that the work force, especially those who were young and skilled, would suffer. That month, the cook at the Bible school died of AIDS.

SABS Campaign

In May a group came to Mutare from Southern Africa Bible School. Lois and Melville Sheasby, John and Stacy Pitman, and Des Steyn were faculty leaders. Des took a group to Nhowe Mission to work with the 1,300 students and teachers there. Melville spoke evenings at Dangamvura and Sakubva while John held a gospel meeting in town. The students taught God's word in public and private, in schools, church buildings, and at business places. They also passed out numerous tracts from house to house and in the streets.

They were kept extremely busy! Finally they took a day off before returning to South Africa. Over forty people ate lunch at our house—lots of chicken salad casserole, vegetables, and cake. The students sat under the gazebo and the outer limits as they brain stormed the campaign's good and bad points. The Nhowe group was very excited about their experience. They were highly impressed with the hospitality, the question sessions, and the descriptions of Shona culture. To add to the cultural experience, they attended a very big funeral, that of Frank Makunde.

A Catholic friend attended the meetings in town and praised John Pitman's simple expository lessons. Of special interest to his grandparents came compliments for Christopher Wheat's song leading. The singing in the assembly during the meeting was truly inspiring.

A World Bible School seminar was held and eight people were baptized. One WBS convert asked us to come to his village at Manunure, 216 miles southwest of Mutare. Loy left at 5:30 in the morning and took nine others with him. Njoma Masvaya had gathered 150 people to hear the word of God underneath a fig tree. Njoma was about twenty years old but had done a great job of teaching the people. A sub chief had been converted as well as many others. The council gave a plot of ground for a church building. Njoma was married according to tribal custom; he later came to study at the Bible school in Mutare, but he first had to get his marriage legalized. His WBS teacher was sister Hamilton of California.

I was suffering from a spur in my heel, hypertension, and arthritis in my back. Dr. Walker did not give me much sympathy about the back pain; he was suffering from the same thing and believed that it was just old age. Old age? Yes, it was my 60th year!

We phoned my mother on Mother's Day. A phone call was better than any gift we could give her, and she looked forward to calls from all the children. Karen, wife of my nephew Brent Taylor, had cooked Mother's Day dinner for Charlotte, Charlotte's mother, Mildred Davis, and our mother. What a lovely gesture for a busy mother to make.

Bobby, Nancy, and I gave a teachers' workshop at 7th Avenue. I spent several afternoons on visuals and bulletin boards; some of the girls helped out. The workshop went well; we had three sessions and a light lunch.

We gained a new "son" for a while when Andrew Little arrived from Abilene. Andrew's father, John, had made several visits to Zimbabwe on behalf of Hillcrest church of Christ and wanted Andrew to experience life in the mission field. He was a fine young man and willing to help in any way. He often sat with the Wheat family and looked as though he belonged to them with his fair skin and red hair. Andrew did not appear to have plans for becoming a missionary, but his experience that year should have given him a better understanding and aid him in reaching the lost wherever he lives. People in supporting churches who have been there and seen the work could make missionaries' work easier.

Roger and Martha Dickson were from Kansas and had done mission work in South America and Central America, as well as preaching in the States. They moved to Cape Town and Roger traveled, often in his own plane, teaching a lesson series and promoting an advanced correspondence course. They came to us that year then moved on through Mozambique to Malawi by car. Their daughter Lisa was with them; they took a lunch and hoped to drive through Mozambique as quickly as possible and camp in Malawi. Mozambique had signed a peace accord with their resistance leaders, but they still had some problem areas. It would take many years to rebuild the country following their wars and famines.

One Sunday morning we both taught Bible classes at Sakubva, went home to pick up used clothing sent to us from Linwood, Oregon. We ate lunch on the road to Morris and left the clothes with Francis Mandivengerei who is supported by the Linwood church. All this entails lots of driving; we arrived at the Avondale church building Sunday night just as young Marcus Reese finished speaking.

Marcus could be called a fourth generation missionary. His great-grandparents worked in Zambia, his grandparents worked in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and his parents, Beth and John Reese, had spent several years in southern Africa. They had moved to the States to work with World Bible School in Austin, Texas, and had returned for a preaching tour. What a devout family Beth and John were rearing.

Monday through Wednesday we attended the All Africa Conference organized by the Independent Christian Church; they had invited Dr. Clyde Austin (of Abilene Christian University) and his wife Sheila to speak. We were encouraged by the Austins and enjoyed the lessons about culture and special problems of missionary families, such as education of the children and re-entry of the family into American culture. A doctor and nurse from Mashoko Mission spoke about care for AIDS patients. There were heartbreaking stories, especially involving women and children.

We kept the Wheat children while Bobby and Nancy attended a WBS seminar in Harare. At bedtime Ian came to me and said, "Grandma, I feel sick!" I discovered that he had found a thermometer in the bathroom and remembered that I had once taken his temperature with it.

It was a cry for attention and grandmas are good at giving attention. When Bobby and Nancy returned, they packed up and left again, with the children this time, because they wanted to attend the Holiday Bible School in Benoni. They stayed with old friends Lisa and Des Steyn and their family.

With the Wheats gone, life seemed calmer. After taking Bible students out to their field program places, Loy and Andrew went to Nhowe where Loy attended a board meeting and Andy inspected the mission that he had heard so much about. I had a quiet day at home; friends had sent some video tapes and I enjoyed watching “Skylark”.

Our sweet Rachel was three that month. We prayed for Marcia who was having health problems and seeing a neurologist about persistent headaches.

We evaluated the drought relief work done in the past months. Most people had good crops, so the food aid was stopped. We observed that much good was done as starving people were given food and many doors had been opened to the gospel. Yes, some came only for the loaves and fishes, but it was worthwhile, and we are grateful to generous Christians in the United States.

Andrew left on the 17th of August to return to Abilene and his freshman year at ACU. He had experienced two different cultures just before he left. He went to Chidemo with Loy for a one night stay, ate sadza with his fingers, slept outside, and sat through endless lessons and singing that went on all night. Just two nights later we sat in a hotel dining room with him as we went to South Africa to get a truck, and he marveled at the six-course dinner and elaborate place setting. So went the diversities of Africa!

Marcia wrote to say she had been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Sometimes she was in great pain but she did have better days. We hoped for successful treatment. We were making plans for the Redd family to visit us in December, and we hoped that Marcia’s health problems would not hinder the plans.

Stanley sent us a sermon tape and Bobby copied it so others could enjoy it; Marjie’s mother stopped by to show us snapshots of Tracy at Disneyland and Mickey Mouse.

William and Karen had flown to California on a business trip. We watched the mail for letters from our family! Mother wrote regularly, usually once a week. Some letters repeated much of what she had already written but we did not mind; I now appreciate those letters for she was not with us much longer.

I made an alphabet quilt for Matthew. It had taken so long to make that I feared it would be too juvenile for him.

Chris gave us a story he wrote for school. He had printed it on his computer; it reads as follows:

A Tall Building

My name is Christopher Ross Wheat. I live in Mutare, Zimbabwe, Africa. In this city there aren't many tall buildings. I'm going to tell you about the time I went to Harare. Harare is the capitol of Zimbabwe.

My dad and I were getting ready to go to Harare. We said good bye and were off. My mom had packed some of my school books because I am home schooled and that's why we're missionaries. Oh, I forgot to tell you that. Anyway, my dad and I like to do things together. I'm glad I have a dad. Some kids don't even have parents, so I think I am blessed.

It takes a long time to get there, about three and half-hours because there is a detour that is about 25 kilometers. When we got there, we went straight to the Crest Jameson Hotel. We ate at the Sandawana Restaurant. They have very nice buildings. In fact, it has the tallest building in Zimbabwe. This building is called the Livingstone House and that was where we were going. See, my Dad's computer wasn't working well so he got enough money to buy a new one. We went to the ninth story. That is where my dad was to apply for a computer. He had to fill out forms so it took a long time. Finally, he finished and was ready to go. We stopped in Rusape for lunch but at last we got home.

In September Loy drove to Chipinge to check on the progress of the construction of the meeting house in Gaza Township. When he arrived he found the men tearing out the foundation which had been laid two weeks before. The trouble came from a tape measure

that was two meters short. The contractor told the builder that the tape was one meter short. However, it was two meters short. The building inspector came twice to check on the building, but each time he came without a tape, so he checked the building using the faulty tape measure. The result was that the building was too narrow and too close to the road. So they had to start over again!

Being a preacher, Loy thought what a good lesson the incident would make. Too many people use faulty tape measures when building the Lord's church. Measure all by scripture!

Our work permit was renewed but for only one year. Since our return to Zimbabwe in 1985, we had been applying for a work permit or a permanent residence permit. We had permanent residence from 1957 through 1976 but lost it by being out of the country too long. We found the applications frustrating; they required numerous forms, statements, and letters and were often delayed.

On the Road Again

At Hwange Game Reserve, we had watched buffalo herds come rushing to the water as we viewed them from a platform, but one week we got to watch them backstage before they got to the water! We were driving through toward the platform when we came upon a huge buffalo herd. We stopped the truck and switched off the engine as we quietly observed. An elder walked out and quickly a herd of 50 or 60 followed, gaining speed as they smelled the scent of water. The rest of the herd, going back into the distance so far that we could not see the end, waited. In a few minutes another leader stepped forward and again a herd followed him, gaining momentum as they ran—Nancy said the teenagers were speeding up the procession. This happened repeatedly as some five or six hundred buffalo went forward to the water, probably a half-kilometer away. This trip the buffalo competed with elephants in their appearances. We saw many other animals, though we saw no cats, unfortunately. Some tourists saw a pride of lions near the Masumi platform but we missed them. And while we were excited and sometimes anxious about the elephants, we were distressed to see the awful damage they had done to the trees. The landscape was gray and brown but it provided a perfect camouflage for the animals.

Loy was teaching several home studies and I was teaching Lorna, who had just endured an ugly divorce after 38 years of marriage. She struggled with bitterness but was helped by turning to the Lord. She was baptized in late October.

One Sunday we met with the Chakohwa church underneath a baobab tree. It was a new church with one of the Bible school graduates preaching there and one of the camps for the field program staying nearby. We waited about an hour and a half for people to meet because most had gone to a funeral.

The dead person was a young mother of four; no one knew about her husband or boyfriend, but they believed this was another AIDS death. That area was one of the worst hit by AIDS. We had a letter from Wendel Wilks in Malawi who said that the Allbrights, missionaries in Lilongwe, were working full time with AIDS victims.

“Surely there must be joy in heaven over those who have repented,” wrote Loy, following the return of Bible students from their ten weeks’ program. Ninety-five people had been baptized and arrangements were being made to help preachers to visit the places on weekends to strengthen and confirm the young disciples.

We spent five spiritually refreshing days in Benoni, South Africa. Our hosts were Milton and Gail Summers; they lived close enough to the Benoni building for us to walk each morning to the meetings. The main lectureship speakers were Harold Taylor and Donna Stewart; both gave excellent lessons.

Tex and Debbie Dutton had helped in the planting of several new congregations in the area, among them Alberton, Brakpan, and Germiston. Fred and Aquila Wide, formerly of Mutare, became part of the Alberton Church. They had previously failed to meet with churches in South Africa.

Jean Lambert and children were there from Umtata; she and Don had started meeting there and Jean was concerned about teaching her children.

News came from Scott and Reola Strother about a mission trip to Latvia; Scott was William’s roommate and had spent a summer with us. We are always pleased to hear that young visitors—old ones, too—have moved on with their mission interests.

Joan and Cecil Doubell, our neighbors, were coming to our meetings, as well as several Americans who were here to teach at Africa University.

One day when I arrived at scripture class I was met by a little Asian boy who asked if I knew about the earthquake in India. What a horror it had been, over 30,000 dead! It was impossible for us to comprehend. The little boy was Muslim and one of six who were not supposed to participate in Christian classes, but he could not help listening. The Asian children were friendly, well-behaved children.

A Farewell to Mother

“My mother is a poem I’ll never be able to write, though everything I write is a poem to my mother.” (Sharon Doubiago, *Ideals*)

As I look back, the years of 19092 and 1993 bring especially fond memories of my mother, because she died in November of 1993. She wrote often; I miss her letters today. I only kept some of her letters; others tended to be repetitious. Now I repeat stories and quite understand her situation.

During 1992 she recalled many past events as she wrote of spending time with her siblings Kenneth, Glenora, Clyde, and Leona. During the next few months Kenneth and Leona died.

She and Leona had contrasting personalities, so her comments were not always positive, but she loved her sister and made a special effort to visit her while she was in the nursing home and hospital in Tulsa. She often wrote that Terrel had taken her to see Leona or Shirley had taken her to the cemetery or Karen and Rudy had phoned or stopped by.

In May the death of Kenneth, her “baby brother,” was hard. One expects death to come according to chronological age but it does not always happen that way. She wrote while waiting to hear news of funeral arrangements and Terrel had stopped and sat with her for several hours. Karen and Bob had driven from Edmond with a meal. People had phoned condolences from Vinita where Kenneth was loved and respected; he had served as an elder there and later in Stratford. Irmogene, his wife of many years, had died several years earlier. Irmogene had suffered a stroke and Kenneth cared for her faithfully for several years.

Later, he became friends with a good woman in Stratford and when he was in the hospital the two of them went through a marriage ceremony; she was determined to take care of him when he was sent home, but he died before that came to pass. Kenneth had a military burial with a letter read that had been written by the commanding officer who sent him the Purple Heart. He had been wounded while trying to save his buddy's life during his long service in World War II. My brothers and sisters were with Mother for the funeral and I was grateful for their love and care. Distance . . . it is painful when one is far away during family crises.

It may have been the deaths of Leona and Kenneth that caused Mother to decide later that year to give up her house and move to a retirement apartment near Jane Phillips Hospital in Bartlesville. It had to be her decision. We had spoken with her several times about such a move, and when I arrived in August, I was rather surprised to hear that she had announced her intention, for we had almost given up persuading her.

Loy was scheduled to speak in a gospel meeting in Oregon and Terrel and Charlotte decided to travel with us across the beautiful plains and mountains to Oregon and Washington. While we were away the other children, Shirley, Karen, and Rudy, helped Mother clear her house then while she was otherwise occupied they moved her favorite items of furniture into the apartment, hung pictures and made it look beautiful. She was very pleased and immediately began to make friends with other residents in the complex. She indicated that she had been extremely lonely on her little plot on Yorman Road, and her being a gregarious person, that was to be expected. Loy and I felt good about saying good-bye to her when we returned to Zimbabwe in September.

In one letter she wrote that she had read her daily Power for Today devotional guide and found to her delight that the thoughts for that day had been written by her first grandchild, our Stanley.

Many beautiful words have been written about mothers. In a poem called "Where Mother Was Born," the poet speaks of the memories of yore, picnics, baseball, and a rambling rose, deep in the country, ending with "No dreams are cherished more than these,

and they'll grow with the years and seem oh so fair, enhanced by the thought that my mother lived there".

"The sweetest sounds to mortals given are heard in mother, home, and heaven" W. G. Brown.

"A mother is . . . different from anything else that God ever thought of . . . she is a distinct and individual creation," (Henry Ward Beecher).

"The Lord's timing is perfect. We believe death is a victory". These words ring through my mind as I recall Mother's leaving us to be with the Lord and her loved ones in heaven. My brothers, Terrel and Rudy, made the above comments when we spoke with the cardiologist against the possibility of life supports. The decision was not necessary as Mother died within the next twenty minutes.

I had been with Mother in the retirement complex for six days when she awakened me to say that she was having trouble breathing. I rang the bell and had assistance within minutes and we took her to Jane Phillips Hospital nearby. Her last words to me were, "I am so glad you got to be with me". It was hard to believe that she was gone—she was a vibrant, talkative person. She had planned to be in worship that morning and we found her contribution check in her Bible. While I was out the day before she had baked an apple pie, although she had been ill and very weak for two weeks. She had planned to go to church with me, pick up a pizza, and have lunch in the apartment. Planning meals up to the end!

I managed to phone all the children and Loy before we went to church that Sunday morning. The next day Loy phoned back to say that he had booked flights to come to be with me for the funeral. William met his plane in Dallas and drove with him to Oklahoma. Marcia and Lee and William and Karen were loving and supportive. I had a long talk with Stanley in California but he was unable to get a flight to Oklahoma during the Thanksgiving holidays.

Before the children arrived, my sisters Karen and Shirley spent the next two days with me at the apartment, cleaning, talking, crying, and eating junk food. It was a good time to renew bonds. I also got to spend quality time with my brothers and their families.

My brothers and sisters had rallied around her and provided nursing care during the last two or three weeks of her life. I thanked

God that Loy was careful with finances and had provided a way for me to be with my parents for a few days each year. I was reluctant to leave him each time, but he insisted that it was something I should do to honor my parents.

Rudy Taylor, my brother, wrote a tribute to our mother:

“Amazing Grace”

Her friends called her amazing Grace. And, truly she was. My mother will spend Thanksgiving in Heaven this year after being called home early Sunday morning. And while the holiday will be somewhat subdued for all our family, it will also be an event for recalling the many good times we shared with this grand lady.

Mom was ready to go; her bags had been packed since four years ago when my dad preceded her in making that eternal crossing. She was cheerful, light hearted, funny, corny, hospitable, gentle, and loving. And she died in total peace, knowing with blessed assurance what awaited her when that 84 –year-old heart stopped beating.

In our family, heaven is real. It’s home. That’s why there is celebration in our hurting hearts today—because this coal miner’s daughter we called Mom is now seated at a festive table where thanksgiving will be eternal, family gatherings will be held every day, and days will last 10 million years.

Back in the Oklahoma hills where she and my dad raised all five kids, amazing Grace was the Will Rogers of our community. Throughout her lifetime, she penned poetic verses for friends and family to enjoy. She found something humorous in every situation and never allowed conversations to get tedious or boring. She met the world’s problems with a cute smile and refused to get bogged down in the details of anything, good or bad.

Her fall-with-the-punches attitude was my inspiration, and her oft-repeated motto was, “Whatcha can’t cure, you gotta endure”. She made lots of old houses into “home” and seldom missed a Sunday inviting someone to our home for dinner after church. Her name wasn’t found in any club rosters; her only membership was in the church she loved so much. But today you can go to any nursing

home in this area and every resident will smile when her name is mentioned. That's because she visited there often, taking along old Christmas cards, homemade cinnamon rolls, and dorky little poems to cheer those special residents.

Oh, yes, one more thing. I received my birthday card from Mom today. Although December 24th is still a month away, she had my card all prepared, including a personal note inside. I'll open it and reopen it many times. And I suspect it will yellow with age as I dig through the boxes and find it every Christmas Eve from this day forth.

It will be during those times that I shall recall the first love of my life—the one who taught me the meaning of life at its fullest. And I'll smile through tears every time. Because I'll know she's home where she belongs.

“A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit which her hands did offer, and let her own deeds praise her in heaven's gates” Proverbs 31:30.

(From *The Caney Chronicle*, November, 1993)

Mother's poem was published was published in *Christian Stewardship*:

Where's Mom?

I'm thinking of two little words
Said over and over again
By every son and daughter
(And Dad when he comes in)
Where's Mom?

No matter what kind of weather
Or what day of the year,
These same two words are uttered,
And this is what you hear,
Where's Mom?

Sometimes they're hungry as a bear
When they get home from school,
And the first place they make for
Is the icebox, as a rule.

If Mom's not in the kitchen
These two words just pop out
And all of them will say it
Before they stuff their mouths
Where's Mom?

She may not be the prettiest
In shape or form or size
But, boy, if she's not stickin' round
You'll hear some voices rise,
Where's Mom?

It could be just a habit,
They may not need a thing,
But these two little words
Just pop out like a spring:
Where's Mom?

In the same publication was a tribute to our parents, who had left a gift to the "Herald of Truth" radio and television program. Rudy's tribute was copied, and Shirley Helms, my sister, added the following story.

We grew up, my sisters, brothers, and I, with love and laughter. My mom made us laugh even during her last days here on earth.

Mom was always there for us. Once when I was a teenager who knew almost everything, I had planned to read a poem at a school event. I didn't bother to copy the poem from the book and on the day of the event, Mom gave the book to a shut-in, as was her practice. Well, I threw a hateful little fit, as was my practice. Mom didn't return with angry words; instead she sat down and composed a poem for me. That night, I recited "Where's Mom?" Since then, that poem has been published several times.

But Mom wasn't alone; she was half of a wonderful couple. It's impossible to think of Grace without thinking of Ross and Grace. Married for 58 years, they thought and acted as one. Even the contribution most recently made to Herald of Truth was planned by both of my parents several years before Daddy's death in 1989.

When anyone was ill or bereaved, Ross and Grace made the call, sent the card or letter of encouragement, or cooked the meal while others were still wondering what to do. Even after Daddy lost his ability to speak eight years before his death, my parents continued their work of serving others, something they thoroughly enjoyed. As my Mom wrote in one of her poems:

Each night as I pillow my head for sleep
I count my blessings instead of sleep;
That God has given me strength and a mind
To do some good and to others be kind!

I have a couple of my Mom’s Bibles which she read and studied. She had written inside the covers and in the margins some of the quotations she lived by. Tucked inside were notes, poems, recipes, addresses. These books were plainly her daily companions.

Mom and Daddy taught us to put Christ first in our lives and generously give of our time, talents, and money—and to count our blessings. Among those blessings we count are a kind, loving, gentle, yet firm father who was uncompromising in his belief, and an outgoing, friendly, upbeat mother who was loyal, faithful, loving, and who faced life’s struggles with “What Would Jesus Do?”

A Special Blessing: Marcia’s Visit

We brought Marcia, Matthew, and Rachel home with us following our trip to the States.

What a joyful reunion there was when the Wheat family met our plane. The children were rather shy at first but after riding in the back of the pickup for three hours they became well acquainted. They played hard the next day before they fell asleep.

Mutare looked beautiful after good rain and Marcia enjoyed seeing old sights. We took a drive to the Old Mutare area and had lunch with Dave and Irene Meikle. We drove to Gwaai River Hotel and stayed in the old rooms, swam in the pool, and played miniature golf where the girls remembered playing when they were children.

Of course we drove to the game park each day and saw lots of elephants, giraffe, wildebeest, and other animals.

All too soon we saw Marcia and the children off on the big British Airways jet and went to the hotel to spend the night. There we saw a group of 21 young people who were with the Peace Corps. Some of them would be teaching in very remote places and would store up a lot of interesting experiences. How young they looked! Did WE look that young when we arrived in Africa in 1958?

When Marcia left Zimbabwe, she took a special parcel to Lee, who worked for his grandfather's pest control company. All he wanted from Africa were bugs! We helped her capture various insects (dead) and after she returned to Texas she wrote that Lee and his boss were delighted.

I wrote, "Thank you, Marcia, for visiting us and giving us much pleasure. I read that appreciation is not appreciation unless it is expressed, so we are expressing our appreciation for you and the love you gave us".

Auld Acquaintance

On the 27th of December we drove to Harare to pay our respects to a fine Scottish preacher, Rob Thomson. Rob had faithfully preached the gospel in the Harare area for nearly 20 years. He suffered a lot from rheumatoid arthritis. We had seen him using a small step ladder to get into his van when going out to preach. Scottish music was being played as we entered the church building and a memorial leaflet was handed to us with his picture, captioned "Fambia Zvakanaka, Baba Vedu" meaning travel well, our father". Rob loved the poems of Robert Burns and "Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgotten" was printed alongside tributes, such as the following:

"Rob was a special man with a gentle nature and love for men of all nations" (Sunset Church of Christ, Lubbock, Texas).

"You were a great soldier for Christ".

"You had an impressive zeal for telling others the Message".

"You had compassion for the widows and orphans".

“You were always a friend to Jesus”.

“You were a dear friend and a gentleman”.

Another Scottish friend died about that time. He was Tom Brown who had worked with us in Mutare, lived many years in Bulawayo, and spent his last years in South Africa. We had seen him at the Southern Africa Lectureship and his last words to us were “I want you to know that I love God.” Tom’s wife, Georgina, also called Dodo, now lives in Austin, Texas, with their daughter Christine.

Sometimes letters go astray on the way to Africa. After Christmas we received a letter from Mother written on 28th of October, Daddy’s birthday. It was comforting to know that they are now together.

CHAPTER 4

MALARIA 1994

Emily Dickenson wrote:

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

I have always believed in God and heaven, but after the death of our last parent (Loy's parents died in 1985 and my daddy died in 1989), I felt closer to heaven and went into the New Year with a new awareness and a solemn feeling about the brevity of life. After all, Mother was only 24 years older than I, and my generation would pass all too soon. Every experience leaves its mark; hopefully, we can learn and grow from it.

In the second week of January, I received a phone call from a distressed Olviry McCarthy, Stanley's mother-in-law. There had been an earthquake in California in the Los Angeles area. I tried to phone and was told that the lines were blocked. Soon Marcia phoned to say that Marj, Stanley, and little Tracy were safe but shaken. Some household items were broken when the house shook and in the aftershock, but they were well. Stanley wrote about the experience in the church bulletin:

A Moment of Glory

At about 4:30 on a Tuesday morning in 1976, the city of Mutare was shelled by rebel forces for an hour. You could see the tracers in the night sky, arching overhead, and then falling to the earth to wreck their destruction. A lot of people underwent some re-evaluation that morning. Churches reported excellent attendance that Wednesday night.

At about 4:30 on Monday morning, 1994, I woke up to a surprise. I began to think some important thoughts.

I didn't care much about the NFL playoffs, not did I care much about the Menendez trial. I wasn't even concerned about the books that might be my most precious earthly possessions.

I climbed out of bed and collected my daughter. I brought her back to our bed. In a moment of absolute clarity, I understood that if my family was safe that little else mattered.

And another thought came to my mind. We were dependent, absolutely, and completely, on the mercy of God at that moment. We are always dependent on God, of course; it's just that every now and again we are reminded of that fact.

Some things are urgent. Other things are truly important. In a moment of clarity, I knew which was which. I suspect that all of you who read this—and about whom I care very deeply—had similar thoughts.

It's a pity that we have to be jolted into realizing this. Christians, of all people, should know what is vital, and what is secondary. God, and family, and our brethren. It wasn't long until I heard on the phone the voices of many of you.

Remember this: when even the reliability of the very earth is in question, there is only One who is reliable by definition.

I waited patiently for the Lord;
He turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit
Out of the mud and mire,
He set my feet on a rock
And gave me a firm place to stand.
Psalm 40:1, 2

Even in the dust and rubble, we could see a little more clearly.

Marcia's first letter after her trip to Africa reported that Matthew's teacher alarmed her for a second when she said, "We are learning some new words from Matthew!" Matthew had said "Masikati," and a few other Shona words he had learned. Little Rachel was longing to be with our dog Bess and felt sorry for Bess because she was afraid of thunder. She often said, "I love Bess!"

I had a spur removed from my left heel and was hobbling on crutches; it looked so easy when I saw others walking on crutches! I was blessed with great nursing care given to me by our sweet Stefanie.

In January of 1994 my sisters and brothers resolved to begin a Round Robin letter, and we received our first lot. Mother had always kept me up-to-date on family news, and that link had been broken, so I especially appreciated the letters. Karen started the ball rolling—or the robin flying—by announcing the coming of a new grandchild; Rob and Jo were expecting a baby in August.

We were blessed that month with a visit from Sam and Nancy Shewmaker who were working in Kenya. They spent two days in Nyanga with Nancy and Bobby. Ron and Susan Potberg also visited with us; they were soon to leave South Africa and move to Austin, Texas, to work with World Bible School.

Tragedies and sorrows made us long for that heavenly home. Andrina Eeson was lying paralyzed following an accident. Christians and other community people were donating cash to help with her medical bills.

We studied with a young woman whose husband was a soldier stationed in Bulawayo. She had sent her husband away when he last came to visit. Why? He had been seeing other women and with AIDS running at epidemic rate, she could not take a chance. Then one evening we heard shouts at the gate and went down to see a neighbor with her little son. Her face was bruised and bleeding. Her husband—a “very nice person when he was sober”—had abused her. We took her to outpatients (emergency room in American terms) at the local hospital, and kept her in our house for a few days, but as often happens, she went back to the alcoholic husband. Is it any wonder that I humbly thanked God for my blessings and my dear husband?

The Mozzies Attack

The anopheles mosquito is one of the most deadly creatures of the tropics. Many people have suffered and died from malaria, the disease they create. In the past, quinine was given and helped;

other drugs came along which were better prophylaxes. Insecticides sprayed around the area and breeding places destroyed mosquitoes and helped defeat the disease, so prevention was neglected, and as a result a great number of people were dying.

We felt fortunate that we had never contracted malaria; we had always taken a prophylaxes, suffering the bitter taste on the day it was ingested. However, in March of 1994, Loy become extremely ill with malaria and was given Halfan treatment; after the second treatment he eventually regained his strength. Our doctor, trained in England, prescribed Paludrine daily and Malaquin weekly, and we managed to escape a recurrence. However, most people could not afford such expensive preventives, and were encouraged to avoid contact with mosquitoes by observing all prevention measures, i.e., nets, coils, etc. When they did experience symptoms, they should immediately seek treatment. Several hundred people, however, never have treatment and die of malaria each year.

There were two funerals that month in the English speaking church. Memorial services were held at the building for Amy Pienaar and Charlotte McHarg. Bobby spoke at Amy's service because of Loy's illness; Loy was able to speak at the second one, with Bobby's assistance. Traditionally, teas were served after services and a number of community people came along; it was a good opportunity to speak to others about the Lord.

A dear friend, Margaret Tonks, came to visit us. Years ago Margaret and her family came to Rhodesia and farmed macadamia and pecan nuts in the Vumba Mountains; they also had an engineering firm. Margaret came from a religious family and was a strong believer; she studied with us and became a part of our fellowship, as did two of her sons. She now lived in England and came to Africa from time to time in order to visit three of her children. Typical of many white families who scattered in different directions after the war, she had three sons in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa, and a daughter in England.

During Margaret's visit we had an especially eventful day, and she was an understanding friend. I had kept the Wheat boys overnight while Nancy and Stefanie went to Harare to see a respiratory specialist. The Easter holiday travelers were beginning their treks

and the boys and I prayed for those on the road, Nancy and Stefenie, Loy, who was moving the Goredema family to Mazvingo, and Bobby and Ray, who had gone to South Africa to get the SABS students. It was good to see Nancy arrive home safely. We were having tea with our visitor, Margaret, and the neighbors who often stopped by, when Ian climbed up on his mother's lap and fell asleep. He had taken a fall earlier, knocking himself out momentarily. We wakened him several times before Nancy went home. While Margaret and I were preparing supper, Nancy phoned to say Ian was vomiting, so we went to stay with the other children while she took Ian to the hospital. He spent several hours there and had to be watched for twenty-four hours; probably he had a mild concussion.

Finally I took poor Margaret, supper less, to another friend's place where she was spending the night. Bobby returned, weary from his trip, and Loy was not far behind; he ate some of the supper prepared earlier.

While in Harare Nancy and Stefanie had gone to a hotel and had a special evening meal, then Nancy talked with Stef about sexuality and purity and asked her to promise that she would remain pure until she married. She was given a ring to be worn until it was replaced by a wedding ring! This idea was presented in one of Dr. Dodson's magazines (as well as the Bible) and since then I have read in some of our church papers of purity pledges made by Christian young people.

In Abilene Christian College we had some classes with a girl named Celia; she married Stuart Jones and they brought their family to South Africa to work as "vocational missionaries". Stuart worked for Shell Oil, and they were invaluable to the church in Cape Town. They visited us in 1994; they had returned to the states while their children were attending university and getting married. We were uplifted and strengthened by their visit; they continued to help and encourage missions around the world.

To Support or Not to Support

Often missions experts condemn the American support of indigenous preachers, and their reasons are valid and reasonable.

However, when we are on the field it sometimes becomes difficult when we know of their hardships and our blessings. Some of our Bible school graduates found work, but unemployment was extremely high and many were struggling to keep themselves alive. We were pleased that many of the young men went to villages and started congregations. Local people helped some with food but had very little means of assistance. We helped several and received help from American friends, especially those who had visited us and had seen the needs.

During the field program when Bible students went out to teach and preach, there were 74 baptisms reported. Most of those conversions came as a result of those young preachers. Also they often worked to get a plot of ground to build a meeting house and the local people burned the bricks. When the bricks were burned, women did much of the work of carrying water and sand. We determined to help them pay for the roofs, sand, windows, and door frames when they could not raise the funds. A number of buildings went up; they were very simply constructed, especially as seen by our western eyes, but it had been a good effort.

Also some of the young preachers wanted to marry, and we agreed that their work would be more effective with a wife. Single men did not get much respect among the people. Their big obstacle was the payment of labola or bride price. It seemed that inflation had hit that tradition hard! We helped some with that problem, and they repaid their loans gradually. (We eventually cancelled some of the debts.)

One Sunday we drove to Nyatate and met with the church under a huge baobab tree. Kenneth and Stephen Ruziwa were preachers there and started the work several years ago when Lloyd and Gen Gifford were in the Nyanga area. They were burning bricks for toilets, the required first step toward a church building. From there they would burn more bricks and begin to build, moving up as they acquired funds for windows and roof. They would be protected from sun and rain when necessary; otherwise, it was rather nice to meet outside in the fresh air.

A Slippery Mountain Day

We slipped and slid down the wet mountain track, wondering how we had again chosen to go to Ndakopa following a late April rain. Children ran behind and alongside us and Loy dropped tracts as he manipulated the truck over the impossible road. As we dropped down into the hollow and crossed the rickety bridge, my mind went back to a weekend long ago when our children stood on the same bridge and distributed Bible tracts. That was the time the health officials came to vaccinate all who stayed overnight in the area, so we got smallpox vaccinations regardless of our pleading that we did not need them!

As we drove to the meeting place near the government clinic, Saul Chaire ran panting down the hill to greet us. The church had died in this area and Chaire had been unfaithful, but several years ago he returned to the Lord and the work experienced a good revival. They showed us the church site where they burned bricks two years ago and were collecting stones; they do not have funds to buy cement and other expensive materials. Hearing the bleat of a goat (mbudzi) and the squawk of a chicken (huku) and following the wood smoke of cooking fires, I saw a man skinning the goat hanging from a tree! That day we had food from scratch, and the preacher may as well have had a long sermon while that goat stewed.

I sat with the older women who were exempt from cooking and Mai Chaire told me that their little Mary and Martha had married. She recalled that our Nancy named Martha. When the third child was born, Betty Troup suggested that he should be Lazarus.

There was joy and full participation in the singing and Loy spoke about Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. Later Chaire announced that their widows had brought more than the meal and oil, for they came with baskets of pineapples, bananas, avocado pears, sweet potatoes, and guavas. We gave thanks with handclapping; they gave thanks with clapping and ululating for coming with the Word and also for the used clothing and teaching material. That particular place is blessed with good rainfall normally and they raise lots of fruit; unfortunately, they have difficulty getting it to market over the treacherous mountain roads.

We separated for classes and Mai Amwari, who with her husband teaches at Mutare Bible School, taught the women's class. They referred the old question to me: "Must I brew beer for my husband?" I read 1 Peter 3 and refer the question back to them, as it is a cultural matter.

The leading men, the Amwari family, and we sat on chairs before a small table while 150 or so people sat around on the ground. Basins of water were brought out to wash hands. More basins of sadza and bowls of meat stew were brought out, and we were given a small bowl of rice at our table; we sampled the sadza, too. It was a happy gathering and we bade them farewell as we left and they prepared to go down to the river to baptize someone.

Coming back up the mountain, we observed that the mud had soaked into the ground somewhat and the truck did not skid into the canyon, thank God. Many people were walking and some were staggering from too much beer (chibuku). The area is overpopulated and most live in mud huts, but the mountains are beautiful. We left the communal lands and came to lovely forest estates, coffee and tea plantations, and a picturesque dairy farm with Holstein cows grazing peacefully on the green slopes. The people's rumor is that the Prince of Wales owns the farm but we never saw him there! Views are breathtaking in the Chimanimani Mountains and the scent of pine, wattle, and gum trees was refreshing; suddenly we were on the other side of the mountain range and the land was dry and arid. A young preacher stopped us along the road to talk and report about his day at Mupudzi church. We talked about the growth of the church as we drove along—new congregations at Birchenough Bridge, Nyanyadzi, Hot Springs, Matiza—all started by the Bible school men in recent years.

The sun had set as we came into Mutare and we took the Amwari family home. We were late for the town meeting and opted to go on home. The moon was full as we locked our gates; this security measure is often an annoyance but at times we are relieved to lock out the world, take a bath, eat waffles, and relax before falling asleep. God is good to us.

Let's Start Talking

A Let's Start Talking group came to work in Mutare in June and July. LST had made a good record in a number of countries by sitting with individuals and reading through the gospel of Luke in the English language. The method was especially successful in the Eastern European countries following the fall of Communism when many people were eager to learn to speak English. The readers were offered a service, and hopefully, an interest in the Gospel was created.

Shannon and Susan Houtrouw, who had spent time at Nhowe Mission, led the group that came to Zimbabwe. With them were Pete Sexton, Allan Durham, and Emily Anspach. We found accommodation for them during the first month, but when the Wheats went to the States on leave the group moved to their house. This was convenient because the readings were done at the 7th Avenue church facilities. Most readers were young black Zimbabweans hoping to improve their use of English but also hoping to make friends with Americans. English is one of the official languages of the land and schools are taught in English as soon as the child has learned to speak it. (White Zimbabweans were rather insulted to think that Americans would presume to teach them to speak English! Most had been taught very precise British speech.)

However, good feelings resulted among the group and some very good contacts were made. Several were baptized and we know of one or two who remained faithful.

Missionaries have mixed feelings about short-term mission efforts. From the positive aspect, good teaching is done and seed is planted for the future. The visitors grow from their experience of teaching in a foreign culture. Missionaries are encouraged by visitors and tend to be motivated to work harder after having special efforts.

There are also some negative features. Work is started with a number of people. The visitors leave while they still enjoy a good feeling with their pupils and converts. After they leave, the local people are left to lead the novices into maturity; that is more difficult and also the "nice young Americans" are more interesting than the

old missionaries who remain. Missionaries are usually working with an overload anyway, and being left with unfinished tasks can be very frustrating. Also the missionary, for the most part, had struggled to get support for his work and for other permanent workers; when a group of people comes out for a short time, it is very tempting to calculate the cost of such an effort and imagine what could be done with that money by permanent workers.

We do not discourage anyone coming; it helps the campaigner to grow spiritually and that may make it worthwhile. Also if some of the young people are inspired to come back to mission work in a full time capacity, then it is well worth the effort.

Brrr!

We had a cold winter in 1994. One morning I found ice on the car, a most unusual thing in Zimbabwe. Most houses have no heat; a few have fireplaces. In trying to keep warm around the cooking fires in village huts, there were often fires and serious burns. One man said, “I have put on my full wardrobe!”

Nhowe Gospel Meeting

Campion Mugweni, a 1963 graduate of the Bible school, held a gospel meeting at Nhowe Mission in July. Seventy-seven precious souls were baptized. In the Manicaland area we heard of seventy-nine who were added to the church.

Anniversary Time

On the 1st of May, 1954, Loy and I were married in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, in the 6th and Dewey church building. Nancy, Bobby, Avril Grottis and others gave us a lovely reception to celebrate our 40th anniversary in 1994. (We had no reception in 1954). The setting was the beautiful garden at the Grottis home. They arranged a lovely table with cake, flowers, old wedding photographs, and my wedding dress. I could find no one to model the dress; it was too small for me at age 60 and with added pounds. My granddaughter was already taller than I was and of a larger build. In any case, the dress made

an interesting conversation piece. Bobby videotaped our friends celebrating with us.

Health Problems

I may have suffered some delayed reaction to my mother's death in 1993, and it may have complicated some of my health problems. I began feeling breathless and having palpitations after returning home, and in May, when we celebrated our anniversary, my blood pressure had reached a dangerous level. My doctor sent me to a cardiologist who worked with me, finally sending me to South Africa for an angiogram; the angiogram showed no blockage. I was put on medication to control hypertension and my health improved except for some minor aches and pains related to my age!

Other Notes From 1994

William had an article published in the *Gospel Advocate* in July. He wrote of the day before the last day and gave some provoking images. Stanley had articles published from time to time in the *Gospel Advocate*, *Power for Today*, and the church bulletin. Stanley was also trying his hand at writing short stories and I enjoyed perusing them. Perhaps someday they will be published!

Kelly and Eleanor Hamby arrived for a brief visit to check on the work at Mutare Bible School on behalf of the Hillcrest church in Abilene. Kelly and Eleanor have given a lot of time in Africa, working in Zambia for several years and after that time coming to spend their summers (African winters) at Namwianga Mission. It was not easy and it was expensive. We love them and appreciate their dedication to the work of the Lord and to educating young people in the Christian way.

Special prayers were offered for Stanley, who was having eye surgery for removal of a pterygium.

A church building at Chipinge was completed and another one started at Ndakopa in the Chimanimani area.

A group of preachers led by Vernon Boyd visited us from Michigan. They attended the Manicaland Gospel Meeting with us. Thinking they might not want to sleep underneath the stars, we

booked rooms at the Birchenough Hotel. We were rather nervous about the booking; the old colonial hotel had been an exclusive tourist hotel by the river, but in later years appeared to be a drinking and prostitution center in the area, especially catering to soldiers from the nearby barracks. However, the staff gave us very special treatment, putting us in the annex far from the noise of the main complex, and we experienced only one or two amusing incidents. The Michigan group was good-natured about everything.

Loy took the group to Nerwande, Damba, and Chitakatira. They also went along to the funeral for old Mbuya Makunde at Nhowe Mission. A funeral is always an impressive cultural experience. There they met Government Minister Davis Karimanzira who was related to the Makunde family and who had been a student at Nhowe Mission when we worked there in the 50's. Vernon Boyd was very interested in the history of the Zimbabwe church and arranged to speak with Karimanzira's father in Harare.

Following that, Washington and Alice Mhlanga accompanied the group and us to Victoria Falls and Hwange Game Park before sending them on their way from Harare Airport.

John and Beth Reese came for a visit and used the Wheats' house during their stay. They bought a travel vehicle in order to travel around six countries during a year's time. John, Beth, and their four children were great campaigners for the Lord. The children learned as they traveled and no doubt received a year's education both valuable and unique. The Reeses worked with World Bible School out of Austin, Texas. They set up a booth at the Manicaland Fair and obtained 4,000 new students. John also found time to hold a gospel meeting in Mutare. (John was born in Zimbabwe, then Southern Rhodesia, and grew up there.) He and Beth returned to Zimbabwe after finishing university in the states and worked for several years in Harare and Kempton Park, South Africa.

Before the third term of school began we drove to South Africa for the annual Southern Africa Bible School Lectureship, a highlight of each year. Several Mutare people went along.

At SABS, Howard Norton was the overseas speaker and we renewed our friendship with him after listening to his good,

practical lessons. Howard was also able to speak Portuguese with our Christian friends from Mutare, Alvaro and Debbie Dos Santos. (Howard had worked many years in Brazil, where he learned the Portuguese language.)

Also at SABS, our local young men, Tyrone Abdul and Sherwin Grottis, were graduating from their studies. Aletheia Eeson had completed two years of three when it was necessary for her to leave because of her mother's injury and debilitation. Darrel and Jo Ann Wright left the school that year, too; they were former Mutare members, and we stayed with Mark and Simone Russell. Simone grew up and became a Christian in Mutare. Mark and Simone went from SABS to preach in East London, South Africa. Our friends, Don and Jean Lambert, were then living in Umtata and working with a small church, and the Wrights planned to join them there. It was good to hear of plans being made for the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Stefanie and Chris Wheat and Tammy Reese attended some of my English classes at Mutare Bible School in order to diagram sentences with us.

World Bible School teachers Wilson and Lu Bright taught several young boys at the Mutare Remand School. Charles Msosa and Champion Mugweni followed up the contacts with more teaching. Nearly all of the forty-two students became Christians and all were present one Sunday at Sakubva worship (with permission from their school supervisor).

Mutare Bible School graduation came following a good refresher course on Hermeneutics, Marriage and Divorce, Church Leadership, and Giving. Our work permit was late in coming and eventually we only received it because of help from Minister Karimanzira. Wheats, as soon as they returned from leave, began the process of having their permit renewed and they, too, had to have help from our friend in the Government Ministry.

Another year was ending as we boarded a plane for London and Dallas, with a full visiting schedule ahead of us, including the Mitchell Family Reunion in Lawrence, Kansas, and the Taylor Family Reunion in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Traditions!

We have always been fascinated by the marriage traditions that the Shona people hold. Traditions do vary somewhat among the clans, and in recent years the cost of labola (bride price) has increased tremendously, especially when one considers that old people exchanged a token of something very small, usually a pumpkin, when the families agreed upon a marriage.

As Christian leaders, we ask that the couple satisfies the civil laws and local traditional laws. Once those requirements are met, we must recognize the marriage, but we encourage a ceremony or some kind of service to emphasize the Biblical teachings on marriage.

I asked some of my Bible students to write an essay on the village tradition. The following are some excerpts:

“The girl will stay in her parents’ home. The boy sends his aunt to go to collect his girlfriend or wife-to-be. However, she does not bring the girl but comes back alone. The girl then comes by night accompanied by her next of kin.

“They will be crawling, covering their heads. Every time they think of money they stop and wait for the boy’s aunt to throw money into the plate they hold. All this is done in order to bring the girl into the boy’s home.

“After the three are inside the house they won’t sit on chairs. They sit on the ground with their heads covered until money is given to them. Then they uncover their heads. The three will also have a clay pot. Inside the clay pot must be a small calabash with oil. The clay pot and the small calabash are put aside for tomorrow.

“An introduction is done to the boy’s relatives and the girl’s relatives. The visitors and the girl are given a room to sleep.

“That night everybody in that village will be present, dancing until late. The drums will be played. This is called African ‘Jiti Jive’. The next morning the girl wakes up early and sweeps the yard of her new home. She then warms water, puts it in her clay pot and gives it to her father-in-law to

wash. She then takes the oil in a small calabash to anoint the father-in-law” (A Gezi).

“Before the two lovers are known by the parents of the girl they first go to the ‘tete’ (aunt), who is the sister of the girl’s father.

“The *tete* will then caution the two lovers to remain faithful to each other. She will then ask the two to exchange gifts of clothes. This is proof to show that they are dedicated to one another. After this procedure the aunt will then inform the parents of the girl that they daughter wishes to be married to so and so. The father may answer by swearing and rebuking although he will not point a finger at anyone. He may say, ‘Who is the robber who desires to take my daughter?’

“The *tete* will then cool down the girl’s father. After the information is passed to the parents of the girl, marriage formalities can begin. The girl’s lover will then look for a middleman. He then can give the initial money for *labola* to the middleman. The middleman talks sitting on a sofa, and the brothers of the girl will stand and beat the head of the man very hard. If he happens to be fortunate enough, dogs will be set before him to tear off his clothes as a sign of discipline. (The African sense of the dramatic is great).

“However, this action no longer happens today. But the middleman must be alert and always behave well in case he will be charged the double amount of money for violating the required orders. After the bride prices are paid in full, the girl will then be sent away to her lover. The two will then live together. The girl’s lover will pay for the service done by the middleman. The middleman will then sit down in the couple’s home and eat roasted maize with them crunching happily. They will be talking about their past experiences in arranging the marriage formalities. The woman will only smile at them and sometimes laugh at them” (P. Musongora).

“History, biography, Christian background affect the national and individual marriage practices.

“John is a Zimbabwean by birth. He was born in the city. His parents are well educated and his grandparents are still alive. He is twenty years old. He once visited his home area and he fell in love with a beautiful African princess called Ruth. Ruth is two years younger than John. John wants to marry Ruth. He tries to investigate the proceedings or methods of marriage. His first inquiry is at his grandfather’s home. The grandfather (sekuru) is the only one who is able to explain to him the procedures of African marriage ceremonies.

“Grandfather says, ‘John you are now old enough to marry. Your parents are now looking forward to a marriage. You must be careful with that business; otherwise you will not manage to pay the bride price.’

“John says, ‘What do you mean *Sekuru*?’

“‘You are not to go to your girlfriend’s house because the family will charge you extra fees for trespassing.’

“John: ‘I did not know that’.

“Grandfather: ‘That is the truth. Nowadays you can decide to marry a girl and since you are old enough you just go to the courts. That is very bad. During our days, when I was still a young man, I met your grandmother at the market place. I had known her from childhood. I did not talk to her about my intention to marry her. I approached her friend and my message was passed on to her. From that day our families knew each other and we were now interacting. My parents visited your grandmother’s place or home. There was nothing bad in that. When I had decided to marry, I talked to my father and he gave me some bags of mealie meal, about six of them. I also paid an ox to the family. We had a party at our house and your grandmother was presented to me. A normal African marriage, without complications.’

“‘Now, please stop visiting Ruth during the late hours. Tell your parents about your intention to marry. Nowadays I think marriage ceremonies are moving along with inflated

rates. People are now charging exorbitant prices, such as twenty heads of cattle or fifty thousand dollars if the wife is educated, e. g., for a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher. I am glad you have come home to marry Ruth, a well behaved child, not educated, because her farther did not want to educate someone who would be married to another family; like yours, John.’

“*Sekuru* excused himself from John and he walked into his small dark round hut. After some minutes a deep snoring sound came from the direction of the hut. Grandfather was tired.

“We also learned a lot from Grandfather’s brief explanation.”
(K. Muraicho)

“Since I have not been involved in the activity, I am going to tell you what I have heard.

“After you are satisfied with your girl lover you make some arrangements to go and see the girl’s aunt. The girl will introduce you to her. Aunt will then ask for a token or proof. This may be a shirt or something else. After she is satisfied she then asks you the date when you will pay for the bride. Then you depart. The aunt will go to the parents of your girl lover with that item and they will make arrangements for your coming.

“Then comes the part of the man. The man who is to marry will go to his uncle and asks for money. Then he goes to the parents and they discuss the issue. If the parents are non-Christians, they put that money in a wooden plate, put off their shoes and wrist watches and start to offer that money to their gods, saying, ‘Your child is about to marry, so guide him, etc.’. If they are Christians, they offer a prayer.

“When the suggested day comes, the uncle will then take his son and they go to pay for labola. They don’t go straight to their in-laws but they go to the aunt’s house. There they will send the go-between or a custodian. The custodian should

be a close friend of the father of the girl to be married. After exchanging greetings he will ask for a plate. He then puts a \$20 note in the plate and tells them that he has come to look for someone who can cook for him. The parents will automatically know what he means. But before they start to charge for a bride price they start to charge for a grocery order. These groceries may amount to \$1,500. After bringing this, then they start to charge you for the bride price. This price would amount to \$9,000 or more in cash. Then they will charge you some cattle, about eight in number. Here they can say six cattle—you just pay cash and each cow may amount to \$400, and then bring the remaining two cows”. (A. Zaranyika)

CHAPTER 5

A VISIT TO THE USA 1995

On a Saturday morning in January, the heavily loaded British Airways plane touched down with a mighty bump as we finished our flight home and saw Nancy and Bobby on the observation balcony. One again I saw mental images of our visit to the States.

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You,” sung at the end of the Mitchell Reunion. Walking through the woods in the snow with Rachel, Matthew, and Marcia. Gary Oliver’s poignant testimony about his faith in adversity and tribute to his physician dad. Memories of Mother and Dad Mitchell, schooldays, Earl’s death. Visiting graves of loved ones, beautiful in the snow. The grandchildren and some of their spouses singing in a beautiful chorus. David sharing a mountain top experience.

Quiet, gentle Louise Menzies, continuing to open her home to us and others while mourning the loss of her John.

Seeing Glenora, Mother’s surviving sibling, and spending some special time with her, an admired aunt who overcame hardships with perseverance now enjoying her evening years.

Lovely tributes to Loy from family and friends at a special “Homecoming for Loy Mitchell”. Recalling our leaving from Lawrence to go to Africa in 1958. Thanking God for flowers given to the living.

The sadness of driving into Bartlesville and knowing that Mother and Daddy were no longer there. Sweet Charlotte’s compilation of a scrapbook from Mother’s photographs and clippings about our family; thank you. Charlotte, you are a very special sister. Viewing four hours of Ashley Grace in Uganda. I think her parents were there, too.

Peaceful evening in Shirley and Ray’s beautiful house in the dogwood forest on Grand Lake. Special time spent with Karen and Bob and Rudy and Kathy, trying to persuade Jenny to come to Zimbabwe for a visit. Waiting at one side of Garfields in the

Bartlesville Mall, while Rudy and Kathy waited for us at the other side, laughing at ourselves when finally meeting.

Funeral in Vinita where we said good-bye to Lena, Daddy's older sister; weeping with her children and recalling Mother's death. Seeing old faces once young!

Sweet companionship with Gene and Sarah Shnell, praying for Gene's brain tumor surgery that week.

Feeling frustration at not seeing Stanley and family; comforted by his phone call and assurance of his love.

Little Rachel's note to "Grandma with the dog Bess" and her admonition to keep the note forever and ever and ever. Seeing "Big Matthew" going off to school.

Hearing our William preach and teach on Christmas day. What better gift?

Touring the Texas capitol building with Karen the night before the inauguration; eating pizza with William and Karen, then saying good-bye at the Amtrak station after returning William's car. Thanks, Will!

Thank God for traveling mercies! We were back home and ready to begin a new year.

We continued to feel some anxiety about work permits. Government still refused to resume our permanent residence. Nancy and Bobby's two-year permit would end in December of 1996, while ours would expire in September of 1997. We heard of some missionaries whose papers were not renewed and others who were asked to leave.

We began a very profitable study on the life of David in the ladies' class in town. I found excellent lessons in "Truth for Today" by David Roper and a good book by Lynn Anderson called *Finding the Heart to Go On*. The latter held some poignant thoughts about fathers and sons and the heartaches of both when controversies arise.

I went with a friend, Joey Coats, to try to persuade our mutual friend, Una Jackson, to go into the hospital at her doctor's suggestion. Una was a hard working woman with a stubbornness that likely kept her going; we were finally successful and Una spent a few days in hospital, announcing that it did her no good. She refused to have surgery but took medication. Una is one of the "characters" in our Mutare experience. She was typical of many pioneer colonial people

whose ancestors came into the country when it was opened by the British South Africa Company and Cecil John Rhodes.

Her children attended Bible classes with us in years past; in fact, two older children had attended Eureka School at Namwianga Mission in the early 60's. Because of those connections, she championed the church and encouraged others to attend. But she never came to our meetings. She kept near her house and garden but had many friends who came to call. She also was very generous with flowers and vegetables from her garden. She asked Loy to speak at her husband's funeral and said she wanted him to speak at hers, yet she never made any commitment to the Lord.

Andrina Eeson, now a quadriplegic, was inviting us to hold a ladies' study in her house when she felt well. We hoped to encourage her and she in turn gave us inspiration in her desire to persevere. Her estranged husband returned and begged to help. He began to drive the car and help the home nurses with the lifting and general work. Tony had for some years suffered from bouts of mental illness and drug addiction, but when he kept to his medication he was a pleasant and useful person. Andrina's condition was a motivation for him to be helpful and beneficial. Everyone needs to feel needed.

Drought Again

In his newsletter, Loy quoted Luke in Acts 11:27-30: "During this period some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, Agabus by name, was inspired to stand up and predict a severe and worldwide famine, which in fact occurred in the reign of Claudius. So the disciples agreed to make a contribution, each according to his means, for the relief of their fellow Christians in Judea. This they did, and sent it off to the elders, in the charge of Barnabas and Saul".

The Herald reported that over three million people must be fed or they would die. Local churches were helping some but more aid was required, as usual. American Christians sent money to help. Loy worked through the local churches in the needy areas, food was distributed, and a record carefully made of people who were helped.

Mozambique

Alvaro Dos Santos, a Portuguese Christian in Mutare, commuted to his shoe factory in Mozambique every day. He was invaluable in helping the churches in the Manica and Machipanda area. Bernard Kanjike, a graduate of the Bible School, was sent there and supported by American Christians. By working through Alvaro and Kanjike many people were fed and some brought to the Lord. Seeing malnourished people reminded us of our abundant blessings.

Wheats Go South

Nancy and Bobby took their family to Cape Town to help in the family camp and preach for a few days for the Bellville church. They enjoyed seeing the sights of the Cape and being with their friends Jill and Derrick Bam.

The Wheat children, being home schooled, made trips a great learning experience. They took special interest in the “Big Hole” diamond mine in Kimberley. They moved through the great Karoo, which in some ways looked like arid West Texas and Eastern New Mexico. An exciting experience was the ride up Table Mountain in the cable car, over 3,000 feet above sea level. They could see Table Bay, the Atlantic Ocean, False Bay, and the Indian Ocean.

Very Special Visitors

All of our visitors were special; Mark Swartz came in June and exhorted and encouraged all at the Bible school and in the English speaking church. Mark could be called a charter member of the Mutare church, for he was a young customs official working on the Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) border when we moved to Mutare in 1965.

Shirley and Jimmy Jividen from Abilene, Texas, were welcome visitors. They traveled with the Wheats and us to the Bible Lectureship at Southern Africa Bible School in Benoni where the lecture theme was “Sound Doctrine”. Jimmy spoke six times in Benoni and on our return he held a gospel meeting at 7th Avenue and spoke each day in chapel at Mutare Bible School.

In November Rex and Debbie Dutton, who were completing several years of work with churches in South Africa, spent some time with the Wheats. (Debbie, daughter of Mel and Lois Sheasby, was an old friend from Bulawayo days.) The two young families had a lot of visiting to do while in the process of attending Rex's workshop on "Expository Preaching" and his gospel meeting.

Another Blessing!

At last we heard that Sally Nicole Redd had arrived safely on the 21st of August 1995. Marcia had a difficult pregnancy and eventually the baby had to be taken by Caesarean. She and Lee spoke to me just minutes after the birth and Marcia was very drowsy and tired. How thoughtful of them to relieve our minds as quickly as possible! (We informed our parents of births by letter!) However, I also heard that the Caesarean had likely saved the baby's life because the cord had entwined itself around her neck. I was crying when Loy came home and had to hasten to assure him that good news had come and not a death in the family, thank God. He reassured me and said I could fly over to be with Marcia. However, it was expensive and I was not ready for another overseas flight at that time, so I opted to wait until our next trip to the States.

Our dear friend, Dot Wolfe, came from Fort Worth to stay with Marcia and family after the baby was born. Marcia said she had brought groceries, but Dot came armed with brownies and a casserole. Redds' church family had been very good to them, shopping, babysitting, and bringing meals to the house.

We had another baby, a little mongrel named Squeak. He was two months old and was Alsatian and Ridgeback. Ian and Chris spent the first day here playing with him, and Ian stayed on for two nights to be with Squeak. When Ian finally left, Squeak often came to us with a question on his face as if to say, "Where is my special friend?" When the cuddly little pup grew up, he was enormous, and the children were not quite as enamored as they had been. Our old dog Bess had been a good watchdog; she enjoyed having a younger dog around once she got used to the idea. A few months later Bess died.

Sometimes There Are Setbacks

The Wheats had lost \$700 monthly support since their return to Africa in 1992. This was burdensome if they were to continue the projects begun and educate their children. Some help was forth coming but with the financial problems, they were thinking of a departure date when the permit expired in 1996. They hoped to be settled and more financially stable when Stefanie was ready for university.

Pietermaritzburg

Our second “take a grandchild along” trip came in August when we took Christopher with us to the singing school in Pietermaritzburg. We drove to Fiesta Park Motel in South Africa, slept in a thatched cottage, and then drove to Howick where Ina and Clayton Waller were living. Howick was some twenty kilometers from Pietermaritzburg.

We had known Clayton since 1955 at Abilene Christian College and later we worked with him at Nhowe Mission and Mutare. They had a room ready for us and Chris was well equipped with his sleeping bag and camp cot. He slept in a study cum television room but had his bed and clothing cleared early each morning. His suitcase was neatly packed with sets of clothing ready and organized for each day! He was a very orderly little lad.

Each evening Loy introduced songs, helped song leaders, and spoke about the importance of music in worship to God. He also preached on Sunday and was well received. As usual, we discovered several ex-Rhodesian-Zimbabweans living there and enjoyed renewing old friendships. Chris also led songs and served as his grandfather’s assistant. One day Ina took Chris to work with her at the Wild Life Preserve. He loved it and joined a group of school children on a field trip.

On the way home we stopped at a pizza place near Johannesburg and then slept once again at Fiesta Park near Naboomspruit. Saturday we stopped at Lion and Elephant Hotel where we had time to walk and rest before bedtime, and then we drove to Masvingo where we met with the church at Rujeko. A field program group was there working with the Goredema family; there had been three baptisms.

Chipinge

The Manicaland Gospel Meeting, a cooperative effort by churches in the area, was held in Chipinge that year. After several years and numerous delays, the church building had been completed there and the official opening was held on Saturday afternoon. Samson Mhlanga, over 80 years old, spoke for an hour to the assembly. He was the one who first planted the gospel in the province of Manicaland over forty years ago; we recalled meeting with the Mhlanga family in their house in Chipinge as early as 1958. Samuel Ndhlovu was working with the church at the time of the opening of the meeting house.

Nancy had to take treatment for bilharzia (shistosomiasis). We were usually able to avoid this snail borne disease by boiling water in populated areas, but somehow Nancy had picked up the troublesome little worm.

Two special babies were born in the local hospital. Jason Dos Santos was born healthy and lively, following some concern about Debbie Dos Santos' confinement. But Myles King was born to Heather and Freddy King with spinal bifida and hydrocephaly. The little lad struggled to live for several months, undergoing surgery several times and making several trips home so the family could enjoy him. The Kings had two little girls and they were pleased to have a brother. Heather's parents, Adele and Mike Margarison, traveled down from Bulawayo frequently in order to help and encourage the family. Many prayers went up on behalf of Myles and his family.

Myles eventually died of meningitis in addition to his other complications. Nancy and I stayed with Heather at the hospital for a while before he died. Meningitis had been an epidemic in one area of Mozambique and at that time the mother of a Bible student died of it. There were several varieties.

Some Things Change Slowly

We had made a breakthrough! Some twenty-five years previously, Loy had given up on my typing all his lessons and papers, sat down at the typewriter, and begun to type with one finger. He had resisted

the computer idea, grumbling that he did not see the use of the things ...they were always breaking down at the local bank...He did not say “newfangled,” but the idea was expressed. Then one week his typewriter stopped, and before he could get it repaired, Bobby brought up his old computer, set it up on Loy’s desk, and gave him a lesson. I helped him with my limited knowledge when necessary. He answered from ten to twenty letters each day, encouraging Zimbabwean preachers by answering their queries, sending our lessons, and paying about thirty preachers with funds received from overseas. Of course we realized that by the time we moved to the states that kind of computer would be out-of-date.

Sunday in the Village

It was Sunday morning and the sun beams were hot over the drought-stricken land of Zimunya District. We have three Bible students riding “second class” in our truck—we in the front rode “first class”. We came to a halt at the Maruru church building, a picturesque site with huge balanced rocks towering over the structure and a few shrubs and trees struggling through space between the rocks.

Taylor Mukono was waiting there for us. He had intended to bring five or six Christians with him, but as we observed the truck getting lower, we realized that about twelve people were climbing into the back of the truck. They carried cooking pots, plates, and a bag of mealie meal.

Brother Mukono climbed into the front seat with us in order to direct us ten to fifteen kilometers to the meeting place of a new church he had planted. Loy, always careful to preserve his overloaded vehicle, drove slowly and cautiously over a rugged track. A few goats and cows reached to feed on the sparse trees because the land has been stripped of grass.

We stopped at Nyakunu near a cluster of huts belonging to the son of a Christian woman; we walked to the designated place of meeting underneath two trees. The trees do not provide much shade, but the women graciously moved my java cloth to the best spot and I sat down on the ground with them. Meanwhile the young people

from Maruru arrived after walking the ten or so kilometers from the Maruru area.

I sat on the ground and watched the big black ants busy around my feet and legs. They often sting, but perhaps the scent of my sun screen and talc repelled them for I did not feel one prick. The men and youth sat on a few chairs and stones.

One of the young people prepared the communion table from the wooden box shaped like a briefcase, which had been carried from Maruru by Taylor Mukono. A village carpenter has made this unique communion tray. It is a sheet of wood with holes cut out for the disposable cups some of our brothers and sisters sent from the United States. (The local Christians do not dispose of them until the cups are completely ruined. They like the individual cups because people drink too much from a large cup. They also break up the communion bread because some might take a whole piece.) The sheet was set in a flat box with a top, which slides over the cups, then a handle was added, which made the tray easy to carry. The cups were filled with a bottle of diluted wine and broken crackers were removed from a jar and placed in a shallow basket.

After worship, the youth took the dregs from each cup and poured them back into the bottle to be used next week. One is thankful for the little alcoholic content, which may purify next week's drink somewhat.

The singing was joyful and they appeared to enjoy Loy's illustrations from the book of Haggai. Loy preaches with lots of drama, dialogue, movement, singing, and objects. I wonder how he will manage to restrain himself when we return to the United States.

After the service, Loy answered questions while the youths brought the basin for each of us to wash our hands (geza maoko). Our food came on glass plates and we ate with spoons; others eat from tin plates with their fingers. While we ate, some of the Bible students and young people walked to the river and baptized three people.

Christmas in Mozambique

At one time Portuguese East Africa or Mozambique was a great resort area for the European population of the area. People from

Umtali could drive to the coast in three hours and many people spent weekends or holidays in Beira or Lorenques Marques (now Maputo). We had only taken one holiday down there during these years because our weekends were spent in our work. However, since Mozambique's independence in 1974 it was not a nice place to visit, first because of the Communistic regime when churches were destroyed and missionaries sent out, then because of a long civil war with the Frelimo and Renamo resistance movement.

Now the war was over and people could cross the border more freely. Alvaro and Debbie Dos Santos invited several families to spend Christmas at an old hotel near Chimoio. Alvaro helped us cross the border; he crossed every day in order to run his shoe factory and knew all the officials well. From there we drove to the hotel, a rundown former resort that had no other patrons except the family of the manager.

The old Portuguese owner told us that he had survived both wars. The soldiers and guerillas had for some reason spared them, yet when the Zimbabwe soldiers came to help the Mozambique government, it was they who burned the house and slaughtered the cattle. We felt ashamed to hear such a story.

We sang and prayed together on the big veranda, which looked over a dilapidated swimming pool and other evidence of former glory. While we sat there, a lovely rain fell and continued for much of the day. What a wonderful Christmas gift in a land suffering from drought.

So Ends 1995

Bobby added an electronic mail code to his newsletter and introduced it to us, but we were not quite ready to install the program into our system. We were not computer literate!

The Bible school graduates were Godwin Chimanga, Lovemore Gwaze, Hazvinei Kaerezi, Luckson Kamana, Theophilus Machingauta, Shorai Mubvumbi, Washington Nyagura, Stewart Nyarugwe, and Ngoni Parehwa. Some would return to villages and farm; some hoped to find work in town or enough support to work with the church. One would try the army, one would work at Nhowe

Mission; all had great hopes but they had to wait with patience.

Stanley wrote that Tracy had taken our Christmas check and bought a pink and mauve bicycle and helmet. “All the kids in California must have one.” Stanley recalled getting a too-large used bike for five pounds. He grew into it and passed it down to the other children.

The year ended with a New Year’s party at our house; we sang and prayed the new in and we were ready for 1996—once we caught up on our sleep.

CHAPTER 6

SCENIC HONDE VALLEY 1996

Our Christmas often extended into the early months of the New Year because of delayed mail. In the New Year we were receiving beautiful greeting cards—photos of the Wight family of West Texas and a picture of a typical plains windmill; little Katelyn Harmon, a great niece, of Houston; the Leonard Bailey family of Canada; Barbara and Chuck McHargue proudly displaying a grandchild; the entire Scott Mitchell family; the Toby Taylor family; a lovely afghan crocheted by Willie May Williams of Odessa; a parcel filled with bits and pieces chosen by Marcia; a subscription to Texas Highways from William; a California calendar from Stanley.

We had a telephone call from the Redd family in Richardson, Texas, where Lee assured us that he still loved us despite the fact that he usually did not come on the line . . . he likely would not have been able to get into the conversation. Matthew told of starting to magnet school, and Rachel's happy report was about caring for her baby sister and a coming Valentine's father-daughter banquet organized by their Indian Princess club. Those festivities were to be at South Fork Ranch of soap opera "Dallas" fame.

Matthew's feelings had been hurt by a school friend who accused him of unbelief because he asked if Mother Nature was real.

I moved up to teach Grade 7 scripture class because the teacher was not well the first term. I knew most of the children, having taught them in grade 5, and it was fun being with them again. They had settled down somewhat and that was a pleasant class, too. Muslim children are generally not allowed to participate in scripture, although they must remain in the classroom. Having been told that he would be responsible for several Bible questions on a general exam at year's end, a Muslim boy inquired if I thought he could make a brief outline of the studies. Most Muslim children are of Indian or Pakistani origin; they are very serious about their school

work, and they are well behaved. A Jehovah's Witness child was not allowed to participate either, but he could not restrain himself from answering some of the questions put to the class. Jehovah's Witness children usually know their Bible facts well.

One Sunday we drove to Chiware where a recent Bible School graduate, Maxwell Mukandi, had planted a church; forty-eight people met in a market shelter. The Bob Doty family supported Maxwell and his wife. On another Sunday that month we drove southeast to Chayamiti, taking twelve people in the truck. The last six miles were over a slippery, muddy road. During the worship the heavens opened and the rain poured down so heavily that we feared for our return over the muddy road, but after eating sadza and chicken and loading the truck we made the six mile trip to the main road in thirty minutes. Panonetsa, who is supported by the church in Forney, Texas, serves that church.

Another week we drove over rain-soaked dirt roads to Watsomba where we sat on a huge rock for worship in the rain; some had umbrellas, others protected themselves with plastic sheets or clothes, and others got quite wet. Shepherd Kamudimu started the church at Watsomba and was helped by Gene and Sarah Shnell.

Bobby began to publish a very fine little paper called *Light for the Way* with financial help and advice from J. C. Choate. His idea was that the title should come from W. N. Short's paper *Rays of Light*, which was printed for many years before that great man of God died. Unfortunately, Bobby and Nancy decided to leave in July and were only able to publish a few of the papers. We hoped that some of the indigenous people would take it over, but they did not.

It was a pleasure to share the teaching of ladies' and children's classes with Nancy. In the ladies' classes we learned much from the studies of Bible women, Luke, Sermon on the Mount, New Testament Epistles, love, and other subjects.

February letters from Marcia reported on Rachel's first soccer game and how proud she was of her white uniform! Marcia had told the children that Grandpa used to raise corn and hogs on the farm in Kansas and they thought it was hilarious that he would "raise hogs". I am glad Marcia tells the children stories relating to their roots.

Nancy began to suffer some “missionary trauma” perhaps. She and Bobby were concerned about their decrease in salary and were contemplating leaving earlier than first anticipated. Their house was always open and they listened and counseled many people. I believe those concerns and her heavy workload complicated the illnesses that came early in 1996. Over a period of time she was treated for malaria and bilharzia; she had laryngitis several times and added to that, she had to undergo tests for heart palpitations and chest pains. The heart problem was not as serious as first feared, but the doctor advised her to continue the heart medication. He also advised her to eliminate some projects and learn to say “No” to some requests. We encouraged her to get more rest, but that was difficult for a busy teacher, mother, and homemaker.

Some of our favorite people are Charlie and Betty Tutor who preached in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. At that time they were living on Social Security and were in their mid-to-late 60’s. They drove to Mutare where Charlie held a gospel meeting and spoke at the Bible school. After they left, Henry Arundel was baptized; Henry was a cancer patient and died a few weeks later.

We took the Tutors to Mupudzi and met with the church and Marvellous Baramasimba, a young preacher supported by the Mutare 7th Avenue church. After meeting underneath a tree beside the road, we drove to Breezy Brae, a small bed and breakfast place, and spent the night. The Tutors left their car there and we drove together to Hwange Game Park and Victoria Falls. What a lovely time we had, viewing the game, relaxing in the camp, and worshipping God together each day. Turning back, we again stopped over night at Breezy Brae where Betty and Charlie drove south to their home and we returned to Mutare. We had good memories.

P. T. Gwini was one of the first graduates of the Bible School when it was established in 1958. By this time he had become a well-known mature preacher, respected by brethren over the land. The church at 29th and Yale in Tulsa, Oklahoma, supported Gwini for many years. He, with other older preachers such as Mutangadura, Tsiga, Mugweni, Chitendeni and others, formed a “missionary team” and went out to different churches for a week’s leadership

and encouragement from time to time. Much good came from this work. Most of the men had trucks, which Loy had assisted them in purchasing with help from American Christians, and we felt that this was good use of the vehicles. In March the team reported 29 baptisms in Mutize.

One of our most scenic trips is the drive to the Honde Valley. We met with 99 people there one Sunday, looking over the beautiful Honde Valley and recalling the terrible battles fought there a few years previously. Thank God for peace and the growth of the kingdom of God. Alison Mhlanga had preached there for years, even during the war, and was supported by the church in Rotan, Texas.

We met with a group in the small gold mining town of Penhalonga and were encouraged by the young Christians there who were actually planning to support their own preacher. We observed that two young couples had grown up in the Sakubva church and were active in the youth group. That, too, encouraged us, knowing that the older church had shown growth and maturity.

I was reminded that the Sakubva youth group was unique in that it worked in helping to prepare communion trays, assist people who were baptized, usher, and help keep order in the assembly when we visited them. Their weekly schedule indicated that they heard church leaders and others give lessons on topics that met their needs at the time.

A long trip was made to Goromonzi where a young graduate, Temba Manzeke, was working for the secondary school and was helping the small congregation, which had been started a few years earlier by a former headmaster of the school, Masaraure. Manzeke's young wife prepared a fine lunch on one small kerosene (paraffin) burner in their one-room dwelling. Great hospitality!

Eighteen miles over a road that was washed out in several places made us wonder if we would get to Mukwada to meet with a church started by Shepherd Maribo who is supported by 7th Avenue church in Mutare. Christians there had burned 165,000 bricks to construct a meeting house. It would be some time before they could proceed further because of the cost of other building materials.

We were disappointed to report the resignation of Paul Chimhungwe from the Mutare Bible School staff in March. Paul

had received a Bachelor's Degree from Abilene Christian University and brethren had hoped that he would commit himself to teaching in the school for many years to come. He took work with a business in Harare.

Prayer is the Mortar That Holds Our House Together (St. Teresa)

Special prayers were answered when we traveled to the states in April of 1996. We were able to visit with Stanley and his family in California after eight years. We had some long talks, we met our little granddaughter, Tracy, and we visited with many fine Christians in the Glendale church.

Flying economy class on British Airways had become more comfortable, especially for people with long legs. Loy always requested a seat with leg room and we managed to get that on one of the overnight flights. We found that flying twice in one month meant seeing the same movie, but we could cope with that.

On the way to the States, we stopped in England. Gill Watson, a former Zimbabwe resident and a Christian, met us in London and took us west some four hours by road to Exeter. We drove through fascinating villages with quaint names like Over Wullop, Middle Wullop, and Nether Wullop. The thatched cottages with flowers in window boxes and gardens, the ancient churches, and the stone walls and hedges winding over the hills and moors reminded me of English novels I had read. We walked through Winchester Cathedral where that feeling of antiquity permeates. Pre-Norman conquest monarchs' and bishops' bones lay in ancient mortuary chests; the more prominent tombs had effigies and canopies. Seeing the stone carved masks gave one an eerie feeling. Of special interest to me was the tomb of Jane Austen. Of course her tomb was a relatively recent one.

We felt the ancient past again when we looked at Stonehenge, thought by some to be from the Druid period long before Christianity. There we felt a stillness that could not be described.

Gill's house was in Exeter, an ancient city, with a beautiful cathedral flanked by Norman towers. We walked through the

Cathedral that is pre-Norman and lovely, with intricate work in stone. King Alfred was buried there. We walked over the stone walks and streets and admired the old structures. They were built to last a long time.

We stayed in a cottage at Stoneleigh by the sea. We drove down country lanes, with picturesque farms set near each other in sturdy stone. There were steep hills and cliffs along the sea. We hiked through the bracken, me in a pair of Gill's high-topped walking shoes striving to keep up with Gill and Loy. We stopped at Branscombe church that was very ancient and had been used for safety during medieval days.

We met with the Dawlish church, also by the sea, and had tea with Joy Channing who was the widow of an English preacher. Joy's husband had been supported by Hillsboro church in Nashville who continued to help Joy.

Dawlish towns run up and over steep hills; one would keep fit climbing up to the shops and down to the coast, which no doubt many residents did. We saw far more people walking than we saw in the United States.

We were pleasantly surprised when we met for worship Sunday to see many former Rhodesian-Zimbabwean Christians: Roy Menage, Edith and John Dawson, Pauline and Simon Jewel. That afternoon Gill took us back to London where we spent the night with Stan and Lindy Frank at Crawley. We flew from Gatwick the next day and landed in Dallas that afternoon, Texas time.

William, Marcia, Sally, Dot Wolfe, and Patti Musselman met us at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. Oh, what a beautiful baby was our little Sally. She was always smiling, it seemed, and we thoroughly enjoyed being with her as well as her sister and brother. Friday we drove north to Oklahoma, taking Matthew and Rachel along. My brother Rudy, his wife Kathy, and daughter Jenny, hosted a Taylor evening with delicious food and a good time. My book *Among the People of the Sun: Our Years in Africa*, had just come out and we gave copies to family members. Rachel and Matthew got to spend a little time with cousins, children of Brent and Karen Taylor. We met with the good people of the Dewey church where my brother Terrel was an elder, then drove back to Dallas with the grandchildren.

We then flew to California to spend three days with Stan, as mentioned earlier. Returning to Dallas, we spent the weekend with Karen and William in their beautiful new home in Irving. On Sunday we met with the Northgate church where William and Karen worshipped; Loy preached and William led singing.

In Abilene we spent some time with our old friends the Palmers; Roy was very weak but Jaxie was her usual industrious self, cooking for us and other invited guests. She had not forgotten how to make chocolate cream pie. Loy reported to the mission committee of the Hillcrest Church of Christ, and then we spent a few days with George and Juanita Hoover while reporting to the Eisenhower church in Odessa. Don and Gayle Mitchell hosted us one night in Midland; Larry and Bobbie Marshall of Knott kept us while we reported to the Knott church. In Snyder we stayed with Aline and G. A. Parks while reporting to the church. We had lunch with Dora and Charley Blakey who were especially good about writing and sending clothing parcels to us.

It was another action packed trip and soon we were flying back across the Atlantic. At Gatwick again, Stan Frank met us. We spent the day with his family; Lindy and Gail (Baines) baked us an anniversary cake, as it just happened to be our 42nd wedding anniversary.

Home Again

Bobby and Nancy met our plane and we had a good visit as we drove home, stopping at Malwatte for our traditional tea time. We talked of our trip and especially about the visit with Stanley and his family in Glendale. Nancy had not seen her brother in nine years. We did notice that our grandchildren were not with their parents; they were at our house with soup ready for lunch and flowers on the table! They had prepared their own breakfast and conducted the daily devotional on their own. Thank God for them.

In recalling the trip I thanked God for our visit with Stanley. I felt tearful many times and the Oklahoma City bomb tragedy being remembered one year ago had me tearful all day since we were with Marcia at home and the television news was on. When the names

of the 168 victims, many of them little children, were read, Marcia reached out to Rachel and Sally and said, “I need to touch my babies!” Matthew was in school. We had serendipity the morning we left in that Reece and Jacquie came by with their daughter Laura. They had arrived from Argentina the night before. We had doughnuts and coffee, talked and showed pictures before they went on their way and we boarded our plane for Africa.

We had to face the fact that Bobby and Nancy were going to leave that year; they decided to leave before September. Nancy spoke to me one day and expressed her feelings of guilt because they were leaving us, but I assured her that their few years working with us had been one of the greatest blessings of our lives. We did not expect it to continue forever.

To The Work

As we returned to our work not every trip was encouraging with rousing conversion stories. We traveled 120 miles southwest of Mutare where we met with about thirty people underneath a tree at Mandadzaka. The preacher there was Benjamin Machingauta, a 1985 graduate of the Bible school. He farmed and received some help from the Avondale church in Harare. He did a lot of work in World Bible School follow up. He and the church there were discouraged, so we did our best to build them up through the Word. The previous week, nine people had died in the surrounding villages; seven of those had AIDS. The Minister of Health was predicting one million of the people in Zimbabwe would be dead of the disease in five years.

On the way to Mandadzaka we dropped off preacher students at Mupudzi, Chakohwa, Nyanyadzi, and Birchenough Bridge. It was a full truck load with twelve people and a bicycle for the Nyanyadzi preachers.

I did not go with Loy the weekend that he drove to the board meeting at Nhowe Mission and then 100 miles further to meet with the Kotwa church. The Harmon family of Edmond, Oklahoma, supported Mathias Chikafa, a 1987 graduate. Chikafa was a good man; he had suffered the death of his wife two years previously.

The church at Kotwa had been given a building site and was making bricks.

Loy slept in the back of the pickup and his traveling companions stayed up most of the night preaching and singing. As usual, Loy was happy to return to the comforts of home—a hot shower, an easy chair, a good bed, and a wife who was pleased to have him home safely.

Stanley wrote of a beautiful incident in the Glendale church. He had the practice of giving a carnation to teachers at the end of the semester during announcements. A member got up and gave a speech about how much the congregation appreciated Stanley, and a small girl presented him with a whole arrangement of flowers. Everyone needs to be encouraged and appreciated. No doubt that helped Stan to carry on with a lighter heart.

Stanley also wrote that Tracy liked to play Pirate games—this after multiple questions about her daddy's childhood. He had told her about our dog, Pirate. Stanley also read to Tracy from my book. Again, I was pleased to hear of memories being kept. I had not told our children enough stories about my childhood.

Marcia's letter told of a girls' day that she and Rachel had enjoyed. Matthew had gone to camp with his dad. Rachel had held a tea party with her friends. She was also mouse sitting for her brother! Imagine a mouse in the house of a pesticide man! Marcia recalled that we had white mice from time to time, and I could remember the odor that they left in the rooms after being kept there longer than I wished them to be. I always felt relieved when one of the little beasties went missing.

From A Distant Land

All parents await news from their children, and letters and phone calls were treasured while we were far away.

Marcia's letters came more frequently than those from our sons, and of course we had Nancy and family with us. Marcia wrote of their first snow, when she awoke to flood lights switched on by Lee in order to announce the overnight snow. She ran outside in her nightgown and threw a snow ball at him. Marcia recalled how I had

opened her curtains on such a morning, likely when we experienced our first snow after we moved to the states from Africa in 1976. Her letters always described the children's activities and we could visualize them playing in the snow and returning to a warm kitchen, perhaps to make snow ice cream.

Marcia and Lee held a Cowboy football game party at their house to enjoy Christian fellowship, and she reported that she had invited neighborhood moms to Bible studies. Marcia had surprised Matthew by stopping at his school for lunch; he was thrilled. Matthew told her of a friend who went to school with his cousin; Matthew said, "I wish I could go to school with Ian!" How wonderful that the cousins were developing relationships in spite of the distance between them.

Little Rachel had been touched by a missionary report from Ukraine and wanted to send some of her clothing to children in that land so recently changed from Communism.

Marcia suffered from fibromyalgia and she wrote of an elder, Steve Brown, who was starting a "Physically Challenged" support group. The elder had multiple sclerosis (MS); others in the church had MS, fibromyalgia, and related diseases; some were blind and others deaf. Marcia commented that Lee was very understanding about her illness and encouraged her to say "No" when stress factors built up. She wrote, "I'm glad Dad takes good care of you like that, Mom! Thanks, Dad." That gave us a warm, cuddly feeling.

Then Marcia wrote that she had a good visit with Marcy Mutuma Manica, born at Nhowe Mission, now living in Dallas! It was one of those "small world" incidents. She also had visited with a Zimbabwean girl whom we had met at Wal-Mart during one of our visits home. Loy, in his usual manner, spoke to the girl at the checkout counter in Shona and was taken aback when the girl returned his greetings and began to chat with him!

From California Stanley wrote that he and his family went with another young family to Santa Barbara on the Amtrak. Tracy and her friends especially enjoyed the ocean museum and all liked the old mission architecture. They saw beautiful orange groves in Ventura, then the ocean rolling into the white sands as they traveled on the train. While moving along they met an Amish family and found their

conversation interesting. Amish folks could not drive cars but could ride on trains.

From east to west, God's creation is wondrous, and it was fascinating to hear reports from both families about their sightseeing.

Good Ideas For Teachers

Carladean Thompson spent two consecutive Saturdays demonstrating to the students at Mutare Bible School how to make very effective visual aids from "trash;" i. e., toilet paper rolls, light globes, paper packets, bits of yarn, string, sticks, etc. She also taught them how to dramatize their Bible stories and use other methods to teach children. Carladean had worked in Kenya; she had spent several years as a child in Ethiopia while her parents did mission work there. She had also worked in the Abilene Christian cafeteria ("Bean") with our Stanley and Nancy.

Cultural Experiences

We ate dinner with a Hindu family one evening. They, like most Asian families here, lived with other family members and owned a business in town. The two old grandmothers sat with us while we talked, but they could not communicate much in English. We were told that the mothers and grandmothers always live with the sons, not the daughters. I had to think about that one: What if there were no sons?

They did not join us at the table, where everyone ate with their fingers. They provided cutlery for our use but we didn't mind picking up some of our food with our fingers; we ate sadza with the Africans that way. One interesting thing we learned was that as a young person, one can opt to be a vegetarian or not. One of the brothers and two young children had chosen to include meat in their diet, and they shared chicken with us. We did not mind eating rice and vegetables without meat, but they were thoughtful and wanted to make us comfortable. With the meat and vegetables they served very hot sauces and sweet semolina.

After dinner we visited; one of the brothers was fascinated with his new wide screen television and satellite dish that brought in news

and sports from all over the world. We enjoyed, that, too, since our set only brought us the local television channel.

The two children of the family had attended my scripture classes in the preparatory school and were allowed to participate, unlike Muslim children. Islamic people were much more radical than the Hindus, who seemed to accept or tolerate any religion.

Jowo

In March we experienced déjà vu—well, just a feeling. We had experienced the official opening of a church building at Jowo in the past. About 300 people came to open an addition to the old building. The original building was opened in 1959, destroyed during the war, and rebuilt very slowly; after Christians had met underneath a tree or in the ruins. Only one or two of the original members were there; many had died. The people there were extremely poor, and we could see hunger on some faces. They had made the bricks and provided the labor for the structure; we had given them money for other necessary materials.

Sakubva

We met with the Mugweni family and 345 others for worship at Sakubva one Sunday in April. My father had helped build the building in 1968; it would not hold the crowd that Sunday. We were pleased to see the growth in giving and evangelism demonstrated there. Sakubva is the oldest and poorest high-density area in Mutare and people tend to move to other places as soon as economic situations improve.

Mutare Bible School and Drought

The above subjects are not necessarily related but they seemed to dominate the newsletters during 1995. Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, had supported the school for many years and was now reducing its contributions each year. Loy and a few others spent quite a lot of time encouraging and persuading national Christians to take up the support of the school on a regular basis. They tended

to send a cash gift once or twice; then they needed motivation to continue. This was a frustrating effort.

The weather and the drought were becoming old news, but nevertheless, we constantly saw the need to help the hungry.

7th Avenue Church

We were away many Sundays, but we did worship in town with the English speaking church on Wednesday evenings. We were using an excellent Bible Study Guide by Dr. Donald and Mary Baker; it covered four years and gave an excellent means to lead the children and adults into the same lessons with emphasis on the entire Bible, time lines, memorization, and review. Some of my most rewarding Children's classes were taught during that time because the children were very enthusiastic about learning. The fact that our grandchildren were learning with the classes naturally increased my joy in teaching. Nancy taught one group and I taught another on Wednesday nights, and we sometimes combined classes and made use of film strips and videotapes.

Chinhoyi

We drove to Chinhoyi to attend a large three-day meeting of 300-400 people. The church there was not very large and they appreciated brethren from other parts who came to encourage them. We heard many good lessons on "The Distinctive Nature of New Testament Christianity" and observed that nearly all of the speakers were graduates of Mutare Bible School. Among them were Velapi Mlangeni, Nelson Chirambadare, Champion Mugweni, Paul Chimhungwe, and Percy Gwini.

Chiota

We had gone to Chiota during our early years while at Nhowe Mission and it was always interesting to revisit such places. Loy, Bobby, and five Bible students drove there, some four hours northwest of Mutare, on the 23rd of April. There were seven churches in the area, served by Alexander Banza, Charles Bukuta, and Japheth

Mudzengerere. Funds from the church at Knott, Texas, supported Bukuta.

Winter came and the church at Avondale in Harare gave Loy twenty blankets to give to the poor in the villages. We added to them and helped some of the Bible students, some of whom came with almost nothing and would have no livelihood during their three years of study.

Namwianga

In July we attended the Namwianga Mission Lectureship in Zambia. On the way, we stopped overnight at Gwaai River Hotel where it was very cold. When we arrived at the mission we spent the afternoon with Sheri Sears, a single teacher from Iowa; we grew to appreciate her as we got to know her better. She was a dedicated single worker; she had adopted two Zambian daughters. That evening before the meeting we ate at Sheri's house with the Merritts, Hambys, Prathers, Jack Bayles, Audrey Craven, and LaDonna Armstrong. The last three listed were there for a six-week medical mission. The Prathers were actually veterinarians and had already worked with the livestock there. They and their two girls, Courtney and Chelsea, age 8, had been there the previous year. What a great experience for the family. Courtney and Chelsea were playing happily with the mission children as well as Ruth Ramsey, Hamby's granddaughter.

Loy and I each gave lessons; the theme was "Maturing the Church". The Zambians reacted enthusiastically to Loy's sermons, and that motivated him to be even more dramatic. After his fourth lesson on Monday morning, they dismissed the meeting so all could line up and shake hands with us before we left. My lesson was taught out in the late afternoon sunshine where it was warm, and the women, too, appeared to appreciate the lesson on Philemon. The interpreter said she had never heard a lesson from Philemon. I used some points from "How to Get Along with Difficult People" by Florence Littauer, and also lessons from a "Truth for Today" paper sent to us by Eddie Cloer.

While there, we gave a copy of my book to the school library as well as to the Merritts and Elders; Iris Elder is Dow Merritt's

daughter. Iris and Ken had returned to Zambia after retirement and were a stable, mature influence at the mission. Iris and Ken were at Kabanga Mission when we met them in the late 1950's. Iris had grown up in Zambia and spoke Tonga as the Tongas did. At this time they were living on their retirement funds and building a house next to the mission; a chief had given them the land as Ken planned to help the people in practical areas. Iris helped teach the Merritt children and the women; she no doubt was nursing, too, as that was her profession.

We stayed in the former Eureka School where the unique Merritt family had taken up abode. Roy (son of Dow and Helen Pearl Merritt) and Kathi had married three years before and had a two-year-old son. Kathi had a son at Abilene Christian University and about nine foster children! Roy had been the mission bachelor and almost 50 when he and Kathi married, and he certainly had a ready-made family. They almost filled up the old school. The master bedroom and guest quarters were on one side of the house while the "dormitory" was on the other side. There was a large dining room and several sitting rooms.

On the way home we took a different route and slept in the Most High Hotel, high above Lake Kariba. Religious people ran the hotel. They sold no liquor, allowed no smoking, and asked if we were married. We qualified in all three areas. It was a refreshing experience; most hotels make a lot of profit from their bars and pubs, and sometimes the smoke is thick.

Driving out of Kariba we came upon a lone elephant on the road. Elephants have the right-of-way! They were often seen in the streets of Kariba and were dangerous to the farmers in the area.

Meanwhile, William wrote that he was flying to various places for American Airlines. He had flown to Buenos Aires and had taken time for a short visit with Reece and Jacquie Mitchell.

Jean Lambert spent two weeks with us especially because the Wheats were leaving. She and the children slept at our house but spent most of the daylight hours with the Wheat family. One weekend Ben and Chris went with us to Bindura and Ben remarked that it was a great experience being with Shona brethren, hearing them speak and talking with them.

Our Wheaties Depart!

There were tears when the Wheat family left. After the tearful good-bye in Mutare, we drove to Harare and spent a few days with them at Rest Haven. That was a good move, and a very special time for us. Sunday morning the 28th of July we met with the church at Avondale, had lunch, then drove to worship again with Avondale Christians and Loy preached. What an empty feeling we had as we drove back home.

Being fully occupied prevented us from dwelling on the absence of Nancy, Bobby, and the children. Loy's August newsletter quoted scriptures, "They were immersed, both men and women," "These commit in trust to faithful men," and "declared the glad tidings in many villages," as he recounted the planting, watering, and God's increase in Hot Springs, Mupfure, Nyanyadzi, Morris, Ruwani, Samuriwo, Chikukwa, Sadza, Masvingo, Honde, and Gweru. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11:28 about having the care of the churches often came to my mind as Loy worked tirelessly to help and encourage the many preachers who talked with him, wrote to him, or sat in his classes.

More Family Notes

I want to remember little things that our children wrote about. Marcia was feeling well as Sally approached her first birthday; Marcia had suffered a lot during her pregnancies and added to those complications was her fibromyalgia pain. It would be a relief to complete the childbirth and nursing cycle. Now perhaps she could take stronger medication for her pain. We hoped so. An additional health note came via Marcia about William: he had suffered from Mieniers Disease for several years and had some loss of hearing. He had not bothered to tell us.

Marcia and Lee wrote about a large church gathering in the park for two Sundays running. Most of their congregation was made up of young families who were more comfortable in the picnic atmosphere than perhaps older folks would be. The weather was hot in Dallas and the children were swimming a lot.

News came from the Wheats that they had a great time in England with the small church in Crawley where Stan and Lindy Frank worked. They also had done some traveling about that lovely, historic land; memories and photographs were made for posterity. For example they went to Dover and visited the castle where most of Churchill's military team ran things from secret tunnels on the cliffs. Then they went to the White Cliffs of Dover and played on the stony beach. From there they went to Windsor and to Lego land, a fascinating place with miniature towns and versions of famous buildings in Britain and Holland.

They made photos of the family in Stratford-upon-Avon, saw Shakespeare's birthplace and "As You like It" performed, but especially they loved the quiet villages and countryside.

Then Marcia wrote that she and William had met the Wheats at Dallas Fort Worth Airport, had frosties at Wendy's, and then had seen them off to Abilene. Nancy and Bobby spent time with supporting congregations and then sought a place to preach. It became a frustrating time for them as each time their hopes were high, they were disappointed.

By the end of the year, my brother Terrel invited them to come to Bartlesville and work for him in the construction company until they found a suitable place to preach. Again they had several disappointments, and eventually Terrel offered Bobby permanent employment with the company. They eventually settled into their own house and became involved with the church at Dewey; Bobby loved the construction work. His first degree had been in Industrial Arts and the hands-on jobs as well as the computer work in the office suited him well. We were grateful that finally they had found their place and were happy.

I loved Marcia's letters and could picture her walking with little Sally while the older children had gone to school. I hope other children will realize how much grandparents appreciate hearing little details of their children's lives. Typical that month were reports of Rachel's birthday party, Sally's chicken pox, her dancing to a television commercial, and Matthew's interest in baseball and Olympics in Atlanta. And we were thankful to hear that Lee's parents had given them a new washing machine for their 14th anniversary.

William turned 31 on August 31st. I recalled that early morning trip to the Old Lady Kennedy Maternity home when he came into the world. Little Sister Mary Todd, a Scotswoman, attended me and she still lived in our neighborhood, retired from nursing service but often called on for help. She continued to walk with a quick step and had never lost the brogue.

Then came letters from the Wheat children and we loved them. Stefanie said they were eager to settle down; the boys' main concern was to find a house with a basketball goal. In a computer printed letter from Ian, we were told that Clyde William Tombaugh discovered the planet Pluto in 1930. Also an American astronomer, Percival Lowell, proved the existence of this planet by studying the behavior of the planets Uranus and Neptune by using mathematics! Christopher's letters were also written by computer and sounded very adult.

One evening the phone rang and it was our two daughters. They were in the home of Betty and Glen Wheat and Betty was holding our beautiful Sally. She said, "I feel guilty enjoying all this; please make a phone call to your parents as a gift from me!" What a thoughtful gesture. Thank you, Betty.

A New Thought

Early in August we received a phone call from an elder who asked us about returning to preach in the States. That possibility was not to be, but it set us thinking, and we decided it would be good to leave in a year's time. Our work permit would expire in September of 1997. Loy would be 65 and I would be 64 that November, and we longed to be closer to our children. But we also longed to stay in our adopted land. Our plans were set in motion. Most people expressed regret at our decision to leave, some shed tears, and many asked what we would sell or give away. The thought of leaving our beloved adopted land was almost unbearable, yet we looked forward to being closer geographically to our family.

A Journey to the Midlands of Zimbabwe

Loy slowly squeezed the truck through a gate entrance, making it necessary for Dominica to get out and shift one gnarled post aside.

I could see two reasons for the scarcity of trees in the communal land: firewood and fence posts. The crops and animals were penned into areas bounded by posts, not straight ones like you know, but just as the little trees came from the land. Trees do not grow very big there anymore; they get cut too quickly. We prayed that something would be invented for cheap fuel! (Wire fences were usually stolen.)

For several months Godfrey Mkizi had written asking us to come to Gweru to meet with the little church in his rural home. Godfrey and three of his brothers were graduates of the Bible School. He worked and lived in town during the week and went 25 kilometers into the lands on weekends where his father's little farm lay. We actually met with the church at the home of Dominica, another graduate of Mutare Bible School, just near the Mkizi plot. We had broken our trip by driving to Mazvingo and sleeping at a bed and breakfast place; there they gave us a substantial Afrikaans breakfast, i. e. juice, cereal, two eggs, bacon, etc. When we got to Gweru we found, Dominica waiting for us at a service station; there he gave us a coke and guided us to the place. At his family home we were served tea, bread, and eggs at about 10:30 a. m.!

A shelter was being erected beside the little house; our truck was privileged to be parked underneath the only tree around, so the shelter was welcomed. However, soon only the men in their chairs and stools were benefiting from the shade, as we women sat on a mat on the ground. I managed to get all but my legs into shade. Afterward the chairman of the meeting courteously apologized to the ladies for their having to sit in the heat. Of course you know where he sat!

When the song leader got up I thought of the carved mahogany head that sat in our living room; the carving had high cheek bones and a long, noble face. The song leader could have been the model for it. Since we had bought the head many years previously it was not likely; perhaps it was his ancestor. Actually, a visitor once asked if Loy had posed for the carving.

We select people were ushered into the little house to eat—yes, again! There was rice, gravy (muto), and meat (nyama). I managed

to slide some of my rice onto someone else's plate. Yes, there are hungry people in Africa, but they will give their guest all they have.

Clouds and thunder came and we welcomed the cool air and a few drops of rain; we hoped they would receive more; we drove through one of two isolated showers as we returned home. Before we left, we were taken to the Mkizi's family home where the old man had planted fruit trees and other crops; he had a borehole, which was still providing water. Obviously, he was considered a relatively rich man. We drove through an area mostly covered with boulders, where they had been assigned a stand to build a church building. Back to Gweru, where we unloaded people, then on to Mutare where we landed tired and looking forward to a bath and bed at 7:30, but there was no water. The following morning the water was on long enough to do the laundry, and then it was off again.

December and 1996 Come to a Close

The Bible school had its Refresher Course with speakers giving lessons from Amos, Church Autonomy, 1 Thessalonians, and Problems and Development of Churches. Graduation followed with eight men graduating.

Loy listed some church statistics from the Manicaland (Mutare) area:

- * Oldest congregation is 50 years old.
- * Youngest congregation is one year old.
- * Fourteen congregations are less than five years old.
- * Average membership: 107; highest 450; lowest 20.
- * Average attendance on Sundays 64; highest 300; lowest 6.
- * Contribution: average \$30; highest \$300; lowest \$6 (Zimbabwe currency).
- * Conversions: average per church 14; highest 93, lowest 3.
- * Reversions to the world: average 5; highest 45; lowest 0.

From my notes came the following comments: I thought Loy might have a bit of a break today, Monday, but it was not to be. Friday night was graduation following the Refresher Course. After

graduation the Bible school board met until after midnight, and then he brought Mpondi here to finish the night, or begin the morning. I had put together a breakfast casserole and cinnamon rolls for the men's breakfast. Loy also took fruit—he had promised them fruit and cereal because that is what he normally eats, but I thought they might expect something more. Then from there, after being stopped at the building by several preachers (all in town for the week's events and wanting favors), he drove to Marondera for the Nhowe Annual General Meeting. Early Sunday morning he met with the church at Mayo, which is an hour or so on difficult roads after the Headlands, turning northward. Now he is having a long discussion with a preacher who claims he and his wife are starving to death as he tries to work with one of the rural churches. He is one of many!

At Mayo, a former commercial farm which now looks like a desert, the church leader had eleven children and hoped to have more; a daughter, age 20, weighed about 35 kilograms, had sores on her face, and likely had the "thin disease", the people's name for AIDS. The education about AIDS prevention and family planning did not seem to have penetrated here.

A few days before Christmas some of us prepared a dinner for special people, i.e. widows, the lonely, and the handicapped. I baked pies and trussed and stuffed a Mozambican turkey provided by Alvaro Dos Santos. The dinner was held at the home of Alvaro and Debbie and was a great success. I always managed to dredge up "ghosts of Christmas past" by playing tapes and records and recalling Grandma's house. No doubt some memories were influenced by Currier and Ives greeting cards.

Loy's good nature and reputation prevented his being labeled a bad neighbor when he chopped down a very large paw-paw tree which broke some tiles from the wall at the back of the property, destroyed several tiles on the neighbor's garage, and cut off the telephone lines to two houses. Our telephone was not on the broken lines. Loy, already overworked, scurried around to get a fencing company, a building contractor, and telephone people around to remedy the situation. At the New Year's Eve party at 7th Avenue, a hilarious Kangaroo Court was held. Guess who brought up the charges and was made to eat a paw-paw amidst much laughter!

Holiday time brought thoughts of home, and we spoke with the children at various times during the Christmas season. We also spoke with Gene and Sarah Schnell, our dear friends who supported us in so many ways and took a very personal interest in the people with whom we worked. Sarah was dying of cancer, she said her bags were packed and she was ready to go home to the Lord. (Sarah died in June. What a wonderful Christian lady, a worthy woman indeed!)

A sweet note came from Avonelle Baird along with a report on a World Bible School contact. She said she and James had read my book and it brought back many memories of their few months with us in the 70's. The Bairds followed our work with interest and were very encouraging to us.

CHAPTER 7

A NEW YEAR, A LOOK BACK AND TO THE FUTURE, 1997

It was with very mixed feelings that we announced our plans to return to the States in August of 1997. We had no idea where we would go in the States but we hoped that Loy, at 65, would find someone willing to hire him for full time work for at least five years. We knew that God would send us to a place to work for him.

Chad and Jenny

An interesting young couple spent some time with us; they were Chad and Jenny Huddleston, graduates of Pepperdine University and acquaintances of Stanley. Chad and Jenny had spent some time teaching English in Japan and were now back-packing around Africa. They had visited a number of mission points and hoped to see Greg and Jill Taylor in Uganda after they left us and traveled to Malawi and other points to the north. After returning to the States, they eventually went to Japan as missionaries.

Dowa

One of our rural trips was to Dowa. Brother Habiwa stayed there part of the week and in Marondera the remaining time. He was a good farmer and was offering counsel for Nhowe Mission's farm program. He also was helping a young preacher, Farai Mlambo, to work with the congregation at Dowa. We were encouraged by the independence of the group; they planned to construct a building within the next two or three years. The roads were terrible and we had to detour to avoid a river still in flood; coming back we passed an old bridge where we used to stop and eat our lunch after meeting with the church at Jowo. I had visions of the children sitting on the ground with us for our picnic lunch. Good memories!

Sad, But Preparations Had to Be Made

Nigel and Fiona Payne agreed to buy our house and the plans went into place. Fiona had grown up next door when the children were small and now lived across the road from us.

Happenings

We were saddened by the physical condition of our friend and sister, Andrina Eeson. An accident left her paralyzed three years previously and she had various treatments, making hopes rise and fall. In the New Year she was hospitalized and it appeared to be a long-term stay—in fact, she died there of malaria in April.

Marjie's father, Mike McCarthy, was very ill from an attack of hepatitis and complications. We phoned Marj and Stanley several times and discussed their coming here to be with Mike.

The Mutare Bible school board of governors had met numerous times to discuss some school problems; as a result, two teachers were dismissed. Another had resigned in 1996 and Ishmael Matangira moved into preaching and leadership training work. Brethren Gwinya and Mangwanda were selected to teach at the school; they were graduates who had spent long years working full time with congregations.

Once again my Bible school students were presenting some interesting English papers. In one paper the following report was made: "There were several women who sold vegetables in the afternoon and their bodies at night. In economics we call this market diversification. All in all, this marketplace was a suitable social laboratory on which the impact of the Economic Reform Program on the masses could be seen."

The annual debate on lobola (bride price) brought the following comments: "Lobola is unscriptural because Adam did not have to pay." "Lobola is scriptural because Jacob paid." "Lobola is not scriptural because Jacob did not pay, he worked." "A father had four daughters and two sons. He collected lobola for the daughters, used the money to educate the sons to be a doctor and a lawyer, and now the two sons take care of the parents." "Our society is being enriched by lobola: only the rich can afford lobola. They make the fathers rich, thus we are sharing our riches."

Gunshots in the neighborhood gave me a momentary shock and remembrance of wartime, but the war was against an over population of monkeys. Monkeys are cute to watch but they eat garden vegetables and become a nuisance. They robbed us of our green mealies (corn).

April brought Roger Dickson and the beginning of a series of gospel meetings at 7th Avenue. Each time a visiting speaker came, he spoke daily at Mutare Bible School, at Ray Grottis' place of business, and twice daily at the 7th Avenue location. In May, Scott Mitchell came from Oregon; in June, Stanley Mitchell from California; and in July, Mark Swartz came from Missouri. The visitors with their varied speaking styles presented many good lessons.

Also in April we were thrilled to have Greg Taylor and Larry Conway here for a few days preceding the Africans Take Africa Conference in Chinhoyi. Greg was our nephew and worked in Uganda; he brought a Ugandan Christian, Grace Nyanga. Larry was a missionary in Elderet, Kenya, and very special to us because we had known him in Odessa and watched him make tremendous spiritual growth before launching out and going to Kenya. We were told that Larry spoke the language in the Elderet area like a native.

ACA

The Africans Claim Christ (ACA) Conference was great. It was Sunday through Sunday with activity packed into every day. Jim Repphart was in charge of singing and other areas of worship, and we sang many beautiful hymns using the overhead projector. What enthusiastic singing! Some groups sang in their vernacular as well. We heard many lessons and reports and had classes. Loy spoke Monday night and he also facilitated a daily class on Motivational Preaching.

There were many prayers offered and special emphasis was given to countries not reached in Africa. The last night we sang "Send the Light" while men from the countries to the north came to the big map and pointed out their countries and other countries targeted. A man from Sudan spoke and brought tears to our eyes, as he told of years in prison, torture, and eventual escape and exile.

He hopes to reach some of his people in the refugee camps. Islam is growing there; when Islamic people come to power, they are not tolerant of other religions.

Wyman and Rosalinda Walker were there from Botswana with their three children. Their children and the Hart children from South Africa were taught the “Walk Through the Old Testament” monologue by Greg and performed for us on the last night of the conference.

At the end of the conference we had a parade of flags with each country showing its color. The colorful costumes from West and Central Africa made our people look rather dull. Unfortunately some had already left, prompting the decision to have it at the beginning of the meeting next time.

Gaston Tarbet received news of his father’s death Thursday night of the meeting. Gaston was called down to the front where elders prayed for him. On the same night, Loy and I were honored on our 43rd wedding anniversary and nearly forty years working in Africa. The elders prayed for us as well.

The first night Loy preached about Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet, using a towel for effect. Then at the close of the evening Sam Shewmaker asked that a group reenact Jesus’ foot washing and called six of seven people from different countries and had their teachers or someone who had influenced them wash their feet.

We were inspired by talks with long-time missionary Wendel Broom who works with the missions department at Abilene Christian University. He was an Albert Sweitzer look-alike in his white beard and hair . . . or perhaps he was a Moses look-alike.

Scott’s Dream Comes True

Loy’s brother Scott arrived with Sam Yaws from the Linwood church in Oregon. Scott said the trip was a dream that he had had since we left the United States in 1958. He was very emotional about his trip. He gave good lessons and took numerous pictures.

Sam was sleeping in a guest room the first night when our dog, a huge Alsatian/Ridgeback, put his head through the open window and barked in his loud gruff voice! Sam must have thought a vicious

beast had attacked him. Sam and Scott did get to see big animals later when we went to Hwange Game Park and had some tremendous viewing and good fellowship.

Soon after Scott left, we met our oldest grandchild, Stefanie Wheat, at Harare Airport; she was to be with us until our departure in August. She was a great blessing to us and very excited about being with her friend and “twin” Janice Grottis. Soon after Stef’s arrival, we had J.C. and Betty Choate for a few days. They rented a car and made a trip to see the sights of Hwange and Victoria Falls.

An Old Friend Dies

One of our oldest friends in Africa was Alan Hadfield. He and Verna were working with the church in Harare, when we arrived in 1958. Hadfields, like many former Rhodesians, had children scattered about the world: Gail in Zimbabwe, Charles in Australia, Donald in the United States, and Neil in South Africa.

Jean phoned to tell us that Alan died in May of 1997. The Hadfields had taken Jean in while she lived in Bulawayo, just as we had in Mutare, and she continued her relationship with them in South Africa. She was bereft at the death of this dear man and said she wanted to see us before our departure lest one of us should die before we could meet again on this earth. So we had another guest soon to arrive and spend a week. Jean always kept life exciting. She helped Stefanie with cooking and planning activities amongst the local people.

Jean also wanted to see Stanley, who was like her brother. He arrived the same week, and the two of them were able to have a good talk before his gospel meeting.

Loy met Stan, Marj, and Tracy at the airport when they arrived; they stopped here only briefly before going up the mountain to Marj’s parents. Then Stan returned here on Friday in order to speak at a men’s breakfast. Sunday Marj and Tracy came to church and spent the week with us during Stan’s gospel meeting. He did the round of speaking appointments, and we were very proud of his ability to speak. He was especially good at narrative speaking and sometimes used stories that he had written which were very appropriate for the

lesson of the text and for the people in this country, who have a great oral tradition.

Stan had not seen Stefanie since she was very small and they found a lot to talk about, both being great readers. Little Tracy, red-haired like Stefanie, immediately bonded with Stef and shared her room much of the time.

John and Beth Reese brought their family and some World Bible School people to Mutare. For two nights we had people sleeping in the house as well as in tents and campers outside. That was fun.

More visitors came on Thursday of Stan's gospel meeting. They were J. C. McCurdy, Mike Singleton, and Mike's son Kevin. They left with us and the other Mitchell Family on Sunday morning where we stopped to worship on the big rock at Mandadzaka, with Stanley preaching once again. From there we went to Masvingo where we saw Great Zimbabwe and spent the night at Breezy Brae bed and breakfast place. From there we drove to Bulawayo and ate at a new restaurant called Kentucky Fried Chicken; then we drove on to Hwange and the elephants.

That Sunday afternoon we also visited with Pegginah and Xavier Goredema. We told them of the message we had received of Gen Gifford's death in Arizona. Gen and Giff had taken Pegginah in and treated her like a daughter when she was a young orphan. Xavier paid tribute to Gen by saying she had trained Pegginah to be a wonder wife and mother.

In Hwange five lions were sighted and numerous elephants performed for us. One trumpeted angrily and made us rather nervous. Our most exciting time came when two enormous elephants drank from the water tank serving the toilet at Guvalala Hide. We were close enough to see the hair on their trunks; in fact, we could have touched them but no one ventured to do so. Another family was at the platform but not a sound was made. The tank is very high and is connected to the platform; when we saw the elephants come to the platform, we thought they were going to attack it! We came home to read that an elephant in the northern part of the country had trampled a farmer. Later, in the small game park near our house, a "border-jumper" was trampled to death by a young elephant. One should not provoke an elephant in any way.

Dorothy Bartley came to Zimbabwe during our last month. She was zealous to walk the roads and visit the marketplaces offering World Bible School lessons. We may have shoved her around as we moved boxes and packed goods around the house. We had a sale and disposed of many items that we probably did not need in the first place. One day Loy came around the corner with a big box and collided with me, knocking me down. I survived. It was a sad time as we said good-bye to our many loved ones.

The morning our plane was to leave we were still moving furniture and clearing rubbish. The previous night, Loy and I burned papers in the fireplace—no shredders there. Campion Mugweni asked for Loy’s large desk and we began to wonder how we ever got it into the small study, meant to be a bedroom. After some shifting and hard thinking, I got a bright idea—maybe the legs could be removed. They screwed out beautifully, and the desk was loaded into brother Mugweni’s pickup. But Loy had not disposed of all his papers and “things,” so we rushed around to do that.

In the midst of all that, our good Christian brother and sister Edgar and Ntu Rwodzi arrived with the makings of a fire and proceeded to cook steak and sausages for us! Edgar said it was their tradition to prepare food for a departing loved one. We thought we were not hungry, but once we smelled the aroma of his cooking we managed to eat. When Alvero Dos Santos loaded us into his truck the Rwodzi family was cleaning up the outdoor fireplace and Onias, our worker for twelve years, was cleaning the rest of the house. Edgar and Ntu took our dog as well as one that Wheats had left.

What can we say about our years in Zimbabwe? They were rich, good years, and memories continue to call us back. We have returned to Zimbabwe each Summer since 1997, spending four or five weeks and taking someone with us each time. Following are some thoughts and also some newsletters we have written.

The Ghost of Colonialism

Today I felt a sense of the past as we met with a church in Village 27 of a resettlement area. There we met in the roofless shell of an old

storeroom. As I sat on the floor during worship, I could see the tops of masasa trees in their red and orange coloring of spring.

Nearby was the old tobacco barn. I wondered how many people lived or had lived in it since the old European farm had been taken over by the new government; it was looking very shabby.

I walked across the land to the old farmhouse. There was what had been a typical farmhouse: the two sections joined together by a breezeway and long veranda across the front. As I looked at the dry, barren soil surrounding the old building, I thought of the well-kept flowers and shrubs that had likely grown there when the farmer and his wife dreamed their dreams and worked the place. I wondered where they had gone and if they had ever returned to see the place. I also wondered where the laborers who worked for the farmer had gone. Did they get a place in the resettlement?

Some schoolgirls joined me. I said I was looking at the old farmhouse and they replied that it was not a house but “the shops”. They had not been born when the war ended and the farm was confiscated by the new regime. They proudly showed me around the shops—the usual two or three stores with the same stock of meal, sugar, oil, minerals, beer, and little else. I had seen more in the old farm stores run by the white farmer’s wife; I sometimes bought fabric and food items in such stores near the mission.

We have seen the two worlds, the one during the colonial period and now during the free and independent period. To our more ascetic eyes the farm looked dilapidated. But the people there were proud and happy to have their own places to farm a few acres and keep a few cattle. There was more dignity there than working for the white farmer and living in a compound. They had their dreams, too, and spoke of building houses, roofing the old storeroom and using it for a church building. In fact, one of the girls said, “We will have a building like that one at Nhowe mission!” (Nhowe’s building is enormous.)

Keepsakes

Today I threw away some small sentimental keepsakes—one cannot keep everything when packing to move to the other side of the world; besides, the silverfish were eating them! But as I dropped

them into the waste basket, I kept them in my memory: the childish note from Nancy; the crushed silk rose which William had given me one day when I was ill; the village sketch by Stanley; the pipe cleaner flower done by Nancy or perhaps it was Marcia; Marcia's Christmas story that quoted Mary as saying, "Joseph, I am going to have a baby. We had better get married!" Oh, I did not throw away everything. I still have a basket full of cards and notes, in addition to several boxes of letters. Someday my children will go through boxes and files and toss more out. I remember finding a small thimble in a packet labeled "Donna's first thimble" in my Grandma Walker's handwriting. I kept it in my sewing basket for years, and recalled my special time spent with grandma in her house at Timber Hill. It disappeared at some stage in my life, along with my high school class ring and a few other items. But memories linger.

Some larger items must be disposed of: the china given to us by sister Edie in Odessa; the tattered fireplace screen given to us by the church in Umtali in 1969; the punch bowl given to us by Penny and Rick Laing on our 25th wedding anniversary (it went to the church at 7th Avenue); the cutlery given to us by our children; the old bark woven blanket which came from Mbuya Mhlanga long ago

But here, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn said it for me: "Keep as few things as possible . . . let memory be my travel bag."

I must include one last memento, newly made. During Jimmy Jividen's gospel meeting Christopher Ross was baptized by his dad. Jimmy handed me a note that night saying, "I know this is the kind of thing you want to keep." Chris had written:

Dear Mr. Jividen,

I am very thankful to the Lord for letting you come here. Just those few lessons I heard from you encouraged me so very much. I rejoice in the Lord that I have shed my skin and God took away my sin and I am a new person. I was truly nervous at first, but now I know that I am most definitely the Lord's. May the Lord be with you forever.

Love,

Christopher Wheat

Returning Home Again, 1998

As we landed at Harare Airport, we were met by Ray and Jon Grottis, and turned toward Mutare in our familiar old Isuzu truck, I thought, “We’re home!” Glynetta and Maurice Callan had met us in London, after our 12-hour layover during which we enjoyed fellowship and a ladies’ study at the home of Stan and Lindy Frank. Maurice had been with us last year and Glynetta was eager for each new experience, beginning with the crowded airport, driving on the left side of the road, and stopping for tea and scones at Malwatte on the way to Mutare.

Many pictures flash through my mind as I re-live our month in Africa. I see the lovely “safari cottage” constructed by Ray and Avril Grottis. Avril worked tirelessly to get workers organized and the finishing touches done before our arrival. We even slept in our old bed, which the Grottises had bought from us!

I see the faces of hundreds of old friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, as they came to greet us. I recall sitting with one friend who told me of helping support twelve nieces and nephews who had been orphaned. Their parents had died of “tuberculosis or malaria or some long illness,” meaning AIDS. Her story was repeated by many as we traveled about the land.

I remember the joyous singing of 116 women at the Sakubva women’s class and many memories passed through my mind, recalling the beginning of that group and of some who have gone on to be with the Lord. Glynetta spoke after each of my lessons, telling briefly of her life of sorrows and joys and the working of the Lord in her life. The women nodded when I told them that Glynetta had, like many of them, experienced grief and sorrow over the deaths of loved ones.

I see the faces of two young people whose grandparents were part of the first group meeting in Sakubva in the 1960’s and am reminded of the passing of time in my own life.

I shall always thrill at the sound of voices singing as they greet us when we arrive in their village. I love seeing the children run to schools, leaving home early in the morning. They are grateful to be going to school because their parents are poor and school fees and

uniforms are expensive; extended family members help many, but others do not go to school.

I see school children sitting on a hillside in their uniforms and listening to a short lesson from God's word. The headmaster proudly showed us around the school and called the assembly together for the lesson. Some class rooms need furniture and the headmaster made a plea for help in supplying equipment for a science laboratory. The government no longer helps with those things; some receive help from international donors.

I picture the grass shelter in Mozambique where the church met and the visiting preacher was too tall for the "ceiling". And everywhere we went, I was impressed by the joy of worshipping God; yet I knew of their many reasons for sadness.

It has been good. And it was good to be "home again". Yes, I can call Kansas home, too, and I have marveled at the wonders of God's creation here after abundant rains. The flowers are beautiful, after getting sore muscles from several days of weeding and pulling crabgrass. (Wonder why one can't say "crab grassing" if weed can be a verb?) God has blessed us. Now we look forward to another homecoming with the Mitchell family in Tennessee . . . and to a home in heaven someday. May the Lord bless and keep you and make His face shine upon you.

The Master Key

"Prayer is the Master Key" might be the title of our four days in the Maware district. Abednego Mugweni, our host at the Mugweni village, sang that little song each evening to begin our prayers, and we found ourselves humming it everywhere we went. Seeing village life through the eyes of our traveling companions, Maurice and Glynetta Callan and Robert and Loretta Hamm, stimulated our view as we met former Bible school men and women and met Christians who always greeted us with joyous song.

We stopped at Shumba (lion) and met with a small group of Christians, chickens, and dogs in the yard of Austin Madzorera's house. They made their plea for help in putting up a building. Food was served to all, but the best was given to us, their guests, in the little two roomed house.

We slept in Mugweni's house at the village; it is not a mud hut, like the old granny occupiers, but a brick house under asbestos tile. They had gone to a great deal of trouble to equip three beds with sheets and blankets. Most village people just sleep rolled into a blanket. We showed our guests the smoky kitchen where our food was being cooked and water heated for baths.

Speaking of baths, water was fetched by village women and heated on the open fire in a big drum (barrel). We were led to the bathing house, where a large tub had been constructed of concrete. We were told to stand in it and wash ourselves from basins on the tub shelf; we were also told to go two by two! Baths were taken in the morning, and breakfast is not served until everyone has taken his or her turn in the bathing house.

We were taken back to childhood days when we walked to the outhouse at night. We women with our stiff joints and handicaps found a treasure in a little portable folding sani-seat, which sat over the latrine long drop. (No, it's not a box seat like the one back in Oklahoma childhood days, but just a hole.) Of course, since all six of us are in our 60's we found it necessary to take a walk during the night, but the inconvenience was compensated by the beautiful starlit sky; the stars shine brighter in Africa.

The village sits on a hill, and we had a panoramic view of trees, bougainvillea, huts, a school, and children playing or running to school. Also women were walking from the stream with pots and buckets of water on their heads; in spite of what we might call poverty; we had the feeling that it was a wonderful life. We heard happy sounds echoing over the valley.

We were given a constant diet of chicken and rice in addition to sadza (corn meal); sometimes we were served three meals through the day. At night we were again overfed at Mugweni's. One evening Mai Mugweni served a tasty dish of steamed pumpkin with roasted peanuts or groundnuts. We thought that was the meal, but learned that was only the hors d'oeuvres when they brought on chicken, rice, coleslaw, potatoes, and more! No, we did not starve in Africa.

At Sadza we met in the airport waiting room! This seemed a joke to us, but apparently small planes sometimes land in the area; it was

only a crude bus shelter type of building. Some of the people sat in the hot sunlight while others were in cool shade. Again we ate in the house being rented by the preacher for \$600(Z), which takes a great lump out of his salary. He has a big family.

Thursday evening we drove over the indescribably rough track until finally reaching the tarred road into Marondera. We checked in to the Malwatte Farmhouse where we slept under thatch. In the evening we ate a European dinner by candle light with soft 40's music playing. Many contrasts!

Paw-Paws, Bougainvillea and Drama

Many scenes come to mind as I recall our recent trip to Africa. One is seeing two large paw-paws in the collection plate at Manica in Mozambique. Fruit is plentiful in that tragic land and one old lady contributed in paw-paw currency...she did what she could.

We moved through old memories as we drove through Musunswe, or sleeping Lion Mountain, near Nhowe Mission. While we lived at Nhowe I made numerous trips to meet with a group of ladies where a little church building sat on the side of the mountain. I recalled that Gen Gifford and Jaxie Palmer often went with me. They tell me the building was destroyed during the war, but a small group of people meets further down the mountain in a pole and thatch structure today. A crude pulpit has been built of sun-dried bricks, but on the pulpit lay a beautiful spray of bougainvillea! What a contrast to the surroundings, but some dear lady had picked the blossoms and presented a thing of beauty for the house of worship.

Chinyamananza church had completed their new building. The old one had been destroyed by the cyclone, which devastated many places last year. The ladies sang as they entered the building and then proceeded to dramatize how they had helped build the meeting house. Water, sand from the ant hills, and poles were carried inside where they acted out the work they had done, singing, and praising God for those who had helped them. They ululated and waved their hands as the story was acted out. Writing about the event can in no way describe it because one would have to hear the singing.

Blessed Experiences

Our journey this year was not without its underlying stress. We felt hopeless and sad when we looked from Nhowe Mission into Arizona Farm, where we spent many hours visiting friends and neighbors. Timothy Matangira related how he watched the “war vets” beat and abduct David Stevens; Stevens was taken to Murewa where he was killed. A cruder sign was posted at the entrance to the farm saying it was the property of the war vets. Stevens’ purchase and improvement of the farm meant nothing.

The new hospital looked good and we looked at mounds of packing cases containing medical equipment sent by Dr. Lemons and the people who are helping him to fund the hospital. The hospital will be a great asset to the community; we pray that peace will prevail and plans can be finalized to officially open the hospital project. Another neighbor on Glen Somerset Farm had built a dam to help supply water to the hospital. Unfortunately, that farmer has also been beaten and his life threatened.

We were greatly humbled during our visit to Beira, a coastal city in Mozambique. The church meets in the most terrible slums: shanties made of straw, plastic, mud, poles, and stones and the shanties are wall to wall. Children are everywhere; probably they do not go to school. They try to sell an orange or two or a tiny bottle of oil or paraffin.

Alvaro Dos Santos, the Portuguese Christian who took us down there, said they often saw children sleeping on the damp ground, having stayed up until after midnight. We left some Christians there when we arrived during the day, and we returned for the evening meeting. It was dark and it had rained most of the day. We had a small flashlight, which was very useful. Water was standing in most places and the stench was indescribable. Those dear people knew of our fastidious ways, and after walking a distance on a small path we came to standing, fetid, filthy water. Young men took our hands and led us to a row of small benches which they expected us to walk upon! I felt very shaky about that, but they took my hand or sometimes put an arm around me as we stepped gingerly across.

When the benches ran out they ran to get those behind us and placed them in front of us. This procedure was followed for each guest.

Normally I would not mind wading in knee deep water (as we did in Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem), but this water was filled with so much muck that we could imagine any number of diseases lurking there. People die every day of cholera, malaria, and of course AIDS. The ground was dry in the church shelter and they had set a table laden with food for us. People sat around us in the darkness while we worshipped God together in three languages. Most of them speak Portuguese and their local dialect sounds a lot like Chewa, which we had heard in Zambia, Malawi, and some parts of Zimbabwe. A radio played behind a wall next door but eventually it was turned off and we could see people looking around the corner and listening to the lessons. I likened the water to Jesus's washing of the disciples' feet. It was a demonstration of service and humility.

We thank God for safe travels and were very happy that we went to our old home this year. We believe our beloved sisters and brothers were encouraged by our coming. We, too, were strengthened in the faith.

Some History

Rudyard Kipling described Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, as "great spaces washed with sun." T. V. Bulpin, in "*To the Banks of the Zambezi*", wrote the following:

In the wide continent of Africa there is not a more picturesque part than the wild garden of trees and aloes and flowering plants that lies between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers wilderness to perfection; spacious, sun-drenched; a jumble of trees and hillocks, rivers and mountains and wonderfully decorative rocks, stretched from one far horizon to the other beneath a heaven bluer than even the deepest ocean.

Alan Hadfield wrote, "In July of 1898, John Sheriff boarded the Zeederberg coach and rattled his way to Bulawayo, where, arriving late at night, he paid a black policeman 2/6 (25c) (?) 89 to find him lodging for the night. At last he had found his niche! Sheriff had come first to South Africa from his home land of New Zealand but had stayed in South Africa about two years."

Alan Hadfield, whose grandfather came from New Zealand to join Sheriff in 1902 in order to help with teaching, described John Sheriff's work:

Though earning his living with a hammer and chisel, his aim was to establish the church of Christ in Rhodesia, making converts according to the New Testament pattern; and though now I would differ with him on some points, he was the first in Rhodesia, and possibly Africa, to uphold the principle of the New Testament church, and the authority of the Scriptures. In his early efforts lie the roots of the Lord's church in that country.

Accordingly, one night he went strolling through the 'Location' (the black township on the western edge of town), and peering through a crack in a shanty wall saw within it a small group of African men trying to learn to read by the light of a guttering candle. Going inside, he offered to teach them, and thereafter he used to hold night classes at his stone-yard on the corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue, where he lived and worked; it wasn't very long before he had over ninety pupils. His primary motive, of course, was to convert his pupils, and this he did so effectively that within a few years the demands of the church and schoolwork had grown to where he needed help. It is also true that much of the spread of the church into Mashonaland, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi) came as a result of brother Sheriff and his Bible students.

John Sheriff settled on Forest Vale Farm, near Bulawayo, a place of some 300 acres, and established schools in order to teach Bible and "letters" to his workers and others who would come. When one of his young men showed promise as a Christian teacher, he would give him support and send him back to his own country to preach. One went to South Africa, another to Nyasaland, and another to Northern Rhodesia. Jack Murzirwa, who walked 400 miles to Bulawayo for training and work, was one of Mr. Sheriff's workers. He returned to his home at Wuyuwuyu and began to teach his friends and family. Frank Makunde said that the first church he knew about began in

about 1912, not far from Wuyuwuyu and the present Nhowe Mission. In the 1920's a school was started at Wuyuwuyu and operated by John Sheriff, W. N. Short, and S. D. Garrett. Some of the teachers and workers during that time were Zuma Banga, Godi Karimanzira, Samson Mhlanga, and Murimi Mukunde.

In 1940 a mission station was established by W. L. Brown at Nhowe, in the Macheke area and a few miles from Wuyuwuyu. The Central Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, supported W. L. Brown and he worked at Nhowe Mission until 1949. Other missionaries at Nhowe were George Hook, Boyd Reese, Dr. Marjorie Sewell, Ann Burns, Roy Palmer, Dick Clark, Loy Mitchell, Alex Claassen, Jesse Brown, Lloyd Gifford, Mark Legg, John Hanson, Clayton Waller, Jim Petty, Rhinard Troup, and Jerry Hayes.

With the arrival of Roy Palmer, Dick Clark, Loy Mitchell, and Alex Claassen, Nhowe Bible School was established to train preachers. Later the school was moved to Umtali (Mutare) and still exists today, mainly supported by the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and Zimbabwean brethren.

How do others see us? Ask a child. The following was written by Stefanie Wheat.

Grandpa Never Wastes Time

Grandpa Mitchell has taken my family traveling for as long as I can remember. Even when I walk with him, I move twice as fast trying to keep up with his long strides; being six feet four inches gives him a slight advantage. Wherever we go, he will have something new for us to discover and a story to tell. Missionary and preacher are his professions but wherever Grandpa goes, he is first a missionary.

When he lived in Africa, Grandpa planned trips to exotic destinations like the game park or the mountains. He got out his well-worn map of Zimbabwe and plotted the best route to take. On the days we bicycled the two-kilometer distance to our grandparents' house, Grandpa consulted my brother Chris and me about the roads to take. It was an honor to trace out with my finger tip the roads and highways on the yellowed, taped-together map. Grandpa sat behind

his well-used desk and leaned forward in the chair, scratching his dark brown hair as he listened to the route we described. Once we had selected a date for departure, we would pack our suitcases. My family and I would arrive at my grandparents' house just after sunrise to load the truck.

Grandpa's pickup was a well-traveled white Isuzu with a fiberglass canopy. It took us over many dirt roads which were not on my grandfather's map. We filled the back of the truck with cushions and a mattress, then the heavy baggage, placed against the cab, and a row of pillows put against them. Near the door was the ten-gallon red and white water cooler and a basket filled with biscuits and sweets. My brothers and I slept in the back of the truck on our long journeys, while my parents and grandparents took turns switching places from back to front.

The best part of the ride was when I got to sit "up front" with Grandpa. After bumping over endless kilometers for about three hours, we stopped for diesel and a coke. Grandpa was never without the seven or so glass coke bottles we needed as a deposit for a cold or sometimes lukewarm drink. Two of us with my grandmother would carry the bottles to the tuck shop and return with a meat pie or a packet of biscuits and drinks. Grandpa started up the diesel engine to a nervous roar as we raced back to the Isuzu.

"You riding first class with me, little lady?" My grandfather would ask, as he leaned over to unlock the passenger side door. I nodded my head and jumped onto the slick vinyl seat.

Red dust covered Grandpa's Isuzu, but the interior was perfect—not so much as a bun wrapper to be found. One thing we could always find, however, in the front cab was a pile of brown tracts with Bible lessons printed onto them. These lay of the dash, and at my feet waited a package of fresh tracts for me to fold. As we drove along, each time we passed a group of walkers, Grandpa would reach across the dash for a tract, stretch out the window, and toss the tract expertly behind the vehicle. My job was to tell him whether or not the tract had been picked up. Most people would race after the tract, grasping it as it swept through the breeze, and would share it with at least five other people. Grandpa had anticipated his chance to share with others.

Once I watched the vanilla colored paper flap and twist in the breeze behind us until it rested in the road in front of a woman. She bent down, picked it up, and waved at the Isuzu as it sped further and further away. Grandpa had fun throwing the tracts out the window and watching them flit past in the wind stirred up by the vehicle, but at the same time, he was teaching the people who ran after the tracts, reminding them of God's love. Driving over the twisting mountain roads, one arm on the wheel and the other reaching for tracts, he threw out another and another, until there were no more.

As he drove Grandpa sang songs. He said it was to keep him awake.

"But if I do doze off, will you mind driving for me?" he asked.

"Sure, Grandpa." I assured him, giggling at the thought of a ten-year-old driving the huge pickup. The songs he sang he had learned as a boy in Kansas, but I was sure he made them all up. He grinned as he sang and millions of laugh lines around his eyes crinkled up, making him look like a clown.

I have never seen my grandpa stand still. In the bank queue he would read the Bible or speak to the person next to him in Shona (the native language). To doctor's offices, he brought a Time magazine, and from his truck he threw tracts. Any time is the right time for Grandpa to serve others.

When we reached our next stop, Grandpa jumped out to stretch his long legs. Getting out of the passenger seat, I looked at him, and he said. "Thanks for keeping me company, I would have fallen asleep without you!"

The sun suddenly turned orange and disappeared from the sky as we reached our destination. In the hotel parking lot, we unloaded the luggage and Grandpa asked Chris to get him another stack of tracts. The scent of roast beef drew our hungry group into the restaurant, where Grandpa made friends with the hotel waiters. When we walked out of the restaurant, he handed each a tract with an explanation about it in Shona.

As we left the hotel lobby he told us the plans for the next day and hugged us all goodnight. "Remember, God loves you," and then a smile would appear as he said, "and so do I."

"Love you, too, Grandpa!" I said. Walking to my bungalow, I realized he had been reminding people all day long of God's love.

EPILOGUE

At the time my grandmother, Donna Mitchell, was weaving her memories onto paper in this second book, I was still that “little Tracy.” Fifteen years have passed since then. Grandma has truly “gone home,” this time to be with God, and much has changed—for Zimbabwe, for the Mitchell and Wheat clans, for all of us—and yet

...

As I step from the airport onto the hot tarmac in Harare International Airport, I am still embraced by the smell of Africa—heat, dust, sweat, wood smoke. The Shona people still greet me with gleaming white teeth flashing in ebony faces lit up by the simple joys of Christian life. It is those joys that never change for the Christian because we have a Jesus who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

My grandmother has left behind a legacy. Her footprints can be found across Africa, in the people she has loved and taught, in the lessons learned and imprinted upon the hearts of many.

But more than that, there is an entire set of children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren who have inherited so much of her—a gentle spirit, her great love of people and God, her knack for the written word. And even more than all that, we remember her steady, earnest influence—that of a missionary heart—helping to inspire us today to share the love of God with others.

Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praises her;
“Man women have done excellently,
But you surpass them all.”
Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Proverbs 31:28-30

Tracy Mitchell Watts
2013



Loy and Donna Mitchell



**William and Karen Mitchell
with Will, David, Katherine, and Lauren**



Marcia Redd and Family



**Mitchell Reunion: Stan, Mary, and Tracy Mitchell;
Stefanie, Ian, and Chris with Bobby and Nancy Wheat;
Loy and Donna Mitchell**



December 1997: the Bobby Mitchells with Donna and Loy



**Donna Mitchell with Chris, Ian, Stefanie,
and Bobby and Nancy Wheat**



Donna Mitchell with the Matangiras

**Stan Mitchell, now teaching at
Freed Hardeman University**



