

*The Path  
That We Have Trod*

I want to dedicate this little book to the memory of my husband,  
Reverend Harold Brown.

For forty-six of his sixty-four years he walked this path and  
I got to tag along with him.

When Harold and I were told that we had to have a name for the Home, he told our attorney that he had to go home and pray about it.

In the 27<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Acts, we are told about a port of safety called Fair Haven. The Lord showed Harold that this Home was to be a place of safety from the storms of life for these children. So "Fair Haven Children's Home" became our name.

*Mrs. Harold (Jackie) Brown*

# The Path That We Have Trod

by Mrs. Harold (Jackie) Brown

*Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Proverbs 4:26*

Here I go again trying to put into words this “Path” of life that Harold and I have walked down. Where do I begin; and who would be interested; and will it bring glory to the Lord?

The beginning – the day Harold Brown and I met. We were eleven years old. We really had met earlier when we were in the first grade together, but we never counted that. There was no interest between either of us then. I was only in that school for a few weeks. Even though we were not Catholic, my mother felt that the nuns were more dedicated to teaching, so I was enrolled in St. Mary’s in the first grade, and that is where I graduated twelve years later. I don’t remember a day of not liking school – respecting my teachers, and fearing some of them.

Harold had moved from Mississippi when he was about six years old, and he had never liked school. A good fight was his delight. He was small for his age, so he always felt he had to prove himself. He was the third of four children, and his home was very unstable. His father was a contractor in Port Arthur, Texas, where we grew up. Harold’s father took his first drink of alcohol when he was forty-two years old because of pressures in the home; he died an alcoholic at the age of fifty-two. In spite of all this, Harold was as close to his dad as any son I’ve ever known.

My home – and by the way, Harold and I lived one city block away from one another – was a secure one. I never remember a moment in my life of not feeling loved. My mother and my biological father were divorced when I was three years old. I felt loved by both of them. A few years later my mother married a bachelor almost twenty years her senior. He was my Daddy Bill. He loved me like his own, and he instilled in me some values that I will always treasure. I wish that I had been brought up in a Christian home, but I wasn’t; however, there was respect, love, and security, for which I am so grateful. One thing I cannot reconcile: I felt badly that my mother and daddy divorced, but then I would be terrified to feel I would not have had my Daddy Bill if they had not divorced. I know this: the Lord can make good come out of tragedy.

Getting back to my and Harold’s first meeting. Even though we were neighbors, we didn’t know each other. We met at the Sabine Theater one Saturday afternoon. I was coming in with a girl that he knew, and we stopped to get some popcorn. I had very long naturally curly hair, and he always said that was what got



his attention. He decided to see the movie again. A vacant seat was next to me, and he took it. After a while he told me his name and asked me mine. I gave him my name, and, I have to say, he was a cute eleven year-old. He had blonde hair, piercing blue eyes, and the cutest little nose.

Then he shocked me. He put his arm on the back of my seat, and before I knew what had happened, I gave him a good slap! He immediately got up and left. He said he went and sat with another girl, but later he came back to where I was sitting. We talked a little while and he kept his hands to himself. We then realized we were neighbors, and our courtship began. He proposed when we were twelve; we married when we were eighteen. We dated others, but we always knew that we would marry. We were also good friends. He had a temper and was jealous even of my little dog.

Before Harold passed away in 1993, while he was still in the hospital, he asked me when I fell in love with him. I was at a loss for words because I don't really know. I just can't remember when I DIDN'T love him. Sometimes I didn't like him, but I always loved him. He always said he fell in love with me at that popcorn stand.

Because of the insecurity of his home, he battled all of his life whether or not anyone really loved him. As far as love, he was only secure in knowing that Jesus loved him. He never really knew how much he was loved or the tremendous influence he had on the lives of so many people. He died believing he was an utter failure. He would never have believed that the procession to the cemetery would be at least a mile long. I wonder if God has let him see yet how his life of faith has touched so many people.

When I was about fifteen, I began to doubt that I should marry Harold, because I felt God wanted me to marry a preacher. Although Harold was a morally good boy, he didn't go to church.

I was very religious. Even though no one in my family went to church, I did. I started going to the Baptist church when I was about six years old. By the time I was fifteen, I was teaching a Junior Sunday School class. Because I went to the Catholic school, I sang in the choir for 8:30 Mass every Sunday morning, and then I walked three or four blocks to the First Baptist Church and taught my class.

I wasn't saved, but I was religious. I wasn't a hypocrite. I sincerely wanted to please God, and I loved Jesus, but no one ever explained to me about repentance and accepting Jesus as my personal Savior. I thought that joining the church and living a good life was what God wanted. I am so thankful for God's sovereign grace, and how He loved me and drew me to Himself. I could have gone to hell being good. He saved me when I was twenty-six years old. My life didn't change that much outwardly, but the peace and joy inside, I can't describe! My whole world changed.

Getting back to this "Path." In spite of feeling like I was to marry a minister, I knew I was supposed to marry Harold. A couple of months before the wedding, we were on my front porch swing. It makes me ashamed to think of it, but as close as we had always been, for the first time I asked him if he was a Christian. It made him so mad! He told me in no uncertain terms that he wasn't a Christian and he never intended to be a Christian. He said his daddy was in hell, and he intended to go there and be with him. (We found out a few years later that his Dad had accepted Jesus before he died.) I had such a sickening feeling. I had never seen this side of Harold. I then asked him if he would go to church with me, and he surprisingly agreed to that.

He later told how he tossed and turned all night and couldn't sleep because he thought of what he had said and how he was feeling. I didn't sleep very well either. I remember praying and thinking that no matter how I felt, I couldn't marry Harold. I really didn't say anything to him, because he had promised to go to church with me. My thinking was that he was already a young man with strong character and good morals; all he really needed to do was join the church, and he would be a Christian.

I was a member of the First Baptist Church which was the largest church in Port Arthur at that time. I never noticed that it was not a very friendly church. I just thought that was the way all Baptist churches were. When services were over, Harold was indignant because hardly anyone spoke to him. He said he would never go back again. I asked him if he would go to another church with me. Remember, I had hopes that joining the church was the answer. He agreed, so we went to a church not far from our own neighborhood. The pastor, Dr. Dolahite, was in his early thirties. I don't remember what he preached, but I know he was excited about it. The church was filled. When the invitation was given, Harold hit the aisle and headed for the preacher. Brother Dolahite asked him his name and why he had come forward. Harold told him that he wanted to join the church. Brother Dolahite asked if he had ever been saved. Harold told him "no," and Brother Dolahite said, "Harold, you don't need to join the church; you need to be saved."

Harold didn't pray out loud, but he prayed the greatest prayer he ever prayed – "Lord save me!" He never got over it. For forty-six years he seldom preached a message in which he didn't tell about his salvation. It seemed to get sweeter and more real to him every day.

I remember how bright the sun was shining on our "Path" that July day in 1947. I thought that the world couldn't get any better than this. Harold didn't have a Bible. The store where I worked sold them, so I bought him one the next day. It cost one dollar and twenty-five cents. He loved it. He couldn't seem to read it enough.

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5, 6*

After we were married about a month, I became so concerned about Harold that I went to the pastor and asked him to talk to him. Harold was upset because he thought our church wasn't worshipping the Lord properly. He had been studying the book of Genesis, and he told Bro. Dolahite that he had been going to church all these months, and no one had brought a lamb or even a dove to be sacrificed; and he was upset about it. I know Bro. Dolahite must have been amused, but he lovingly explained to my young husband that Jesus was our sacrifice. He then suggested that Harold begin his Bible study in the New Testament.

That dear little "dollar-and-twenty-five cent" Bible was so used and worn! It's been retired a good many years now and lies in my cedar chest.

## II

After we married, the "Path" became so crooked we could hardly keep our balance. Because of some physical problems, I was never supposed to have a child. But here I was expecting, and we were so thrilled. We knew the Lord was going to make everything all right. Because I was raised as an only child, I wanted a big family, and Harold's greatest wish was to have a Christian home.

Everything seemed to go wrong. I was so sick with one kidney infection after another. I was in the hospital most of the nine months. Harold was a carpenter, and his ride would pick him up at the hospital. He had to work long, hard hours, but I never spent one night in that hospital without him with me. He slept on newspaper on a marble floor beside my bed.

The doctors kept telling us that this would be the only child we would ever have, so we decided to ask the Lord to give us a little girl. The doctors didn't encourage us on that either, because they said that the heartbeat was so strong they really believed it was a boy. Harold and I never even picked out a name for a boy.

Dr. Young kept telling us he was going to get a cake and have a party if my weight ever got up to one hundred pounds. Things just wouldn't get better; in fact, sometimes it was so dark we could hardly see the "Path" at all.

One night at the hospital, the doctors told Harold and my family that they didn't think I would live, but if they took me to surgery, there was a fifty-fifty chance that they could save our baby. I didn't know until much later that as I was rushed into surgery, Harold was kneeling outside the doors telling God that he would preach if He would let me live. They were in such a rush to save the baby that I was not fully asleep, and I felt the knife as it cut into my flesh. But the next

thing I knew Harold was kissing me and saying, "It's a little girl, and she has the tiniest little fingers." We named her Sherilyn Ann. She has been the blessing of our life! The Scripture that so describes her is over in Proverbs 31:29, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

The sun was shining on our "Path." In five days I went home with my little daughter. My mother and grandmother were there to take care of us. I was still quite helpless, but I felt good.

I didn't know my husband was in the yard making a bargain with the Lord. He was explaining to God how much pressure he was under when he told Him he would preach, and he knew the Lord would understand. He promised Him he would live for Him and witness for Him, but he really couldn't preach. About the time he got through with that conversation, he heard my mother screaming inside the house. I was in convulsions. Most of what happened, I don't remember. I do remember the siren of the ambulance, my head hurting, and being blind.

When I was able to think a little, I found myself in a strange hospital about a hundred miles from home. I found out later that I had been rushed by ambulance to two different hospitals, and about two weeks were gone from my life.

I couldn't understand why the Lord let me be so sick. One night I lay in that bed and asked the Lord if He would just let me live six months so that I could be with my baby girl. That same night, in a hotel room, Harold was sharing with my Daddy Bill. When Daddy Bill went to sleep, Harold knelt by the bed and told the Lord one more time that if He would heal me, he would preach. The next day I could see, and my head was clear. I stayed in the hospital about two more weeks getting my strength back.

Neither Harold nor I told each other or anyone else about our prayers. I thought God had given me another six months to live, and Harold thought he had better preach! He didn't; he kept putting it off, and he never told a soul that God had called him to preach. In spite of this, God was so merciful!

About a year went by. In the meantime, Harold's oldest sister, Jewel, at the age of only twenty-seven, passed away. Two weeks before she died, she asked us if we would raise her four year-old daughter if something should happen to her. Soon Dolly Jean came into our lives. Her mother was buried on her fifth birthday. Bless her little heart; it was a sad birthday! She didn't want people to know that she wasn't born to us, and many times, especially as a pastor and family, it was hard to explain. Harold loved to tell, especially nosey people, how we started courting when we were eleven; he proposed when we were twelve; Dolly Jean was born when we were fourteen; and we married when we were eighteen! That might be the norm for this day and time, but it certainly wasn't back then! Because of Dolly Jean, Harold became "Papa." She had a daddy and a step-daddy, so we decided that Harold would be "Papa," and I would be "Mama."

I wish my health had been better, and I had been more mature. I think I would have been a better mother. I can honestly say that my two daughters never caused me or my husband to be ashamed of them. They were not perfect, but they were both good Christian daughters. For fifteen years Dolly Jean was a faithful preacher's wife, and God chose to take her home when she was thirty-three years old. She is with Him, but her little body lies beside two of her baby boys in a cemetery not far from where I live.

### III

Harold finally surrendered to preach after battling and bargaining with the Lord. It wasn't that he didn't want to do God's will – he just felt he wasn't worthy to be a preacher. Before he did surrender, the Lord had to bring us down a wobbly "Path." I kept having problems, especially with my kidneys. I was in bed more than I was out. Finally the doctor told me that he could not keep treating me if I wouldn't go into the hospital. I told him and Harold, "No more!" I wasn't going back to the hospital. Then I told Harold of my prayer and how I had asked the Lord to let me live six months to care for my baby. She was now two years old, and I felt He had been so good to me, and maybe it was time for me to go.

Harold knelt by the bed and took me in his arms as he started to cry. He said, "Jackie, do you know why you are sick?" I said, "No." Then he told me how God had been calling him to preach. All of this happened on a Wednesday, and that night he went before the church and told them. That night God touched my body.

We traded all of our furniture for a little Masonite house trailer and pulled it to Marshall, Texas, to go to college. We thought it would be heaven on earth to live among preachers and their families. It didn't take us long to get disillusioned. I'm sure they were more disappointed in us. We had some hard times and weren't strong enough to stay in school. But the Lord did use that experience.

I remember one sunny day when Harold let Sherilyn ride to town with him. They were in the car when she began to have a seizure. They were about two blocks away from the doctor's office. She had on a little blue checkered dress, and the doctor and nurse stripped it and all of her clothes off trying to revive her. Finally the doctor said to call the ambulance and get her to the hospital. Harold grabbed Sherilyn up in his arms and ran with her all the way to the hospital.

That night she would have one convulsion after another. They just wouldn't stop. I was in a panic, and Harold was almost out of his mind. I remember that the doctor left the room, and the nurse turned off the oxygen, and she was crying. Our baby was dying. I looked around and Harold was gone, too.



I don't know if ever I prayed so desperately! Finally, I said, "Well, Lord, she is yours, and I know that if she dies now she will be in heaven; and if she lives it may be that she will not accept Jesus as her Savior." Just as I finished that sentence, she had one of the strongest seizures she had. I started screaming, "Don't take her! Don't take her! I'll raise her for You, Lord!" Just then Harold put his hands on my shoulders and said, "She is going to be all right." As he leaned over her all the blue left her face, and her little lips began to be pink again. She opened her big blue eyes and said, "Papa." Harold then told me about where he had been when I felt he should have been at my side.

He had called our pastor and asked him to come to the hospital. Brother Carnett told him that his wife was gone in the car, and he couldn't come right then. He told Harold to go somewhere private and pray, and that he would pray also. Harold found a vacant hospital room and he prayed until God told him it was all right.

Oh, what a bright "Path" it was that morning when we took our baby home. God completely healed her; there never was another seizure. I never forgot the promise I had made to the Lord to raise Sherilyn for the Lord. I didn't always do things just right, but I tried. Sherilyn's first sentence was "Jesus loves me, this I know."

#### IV

*And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Colossians 3:14*

While we were in east Texas, in college, the Lord showed us that our ministry would be a ministry to children. It was a cold November day just before Thanksgiving. We had heard of a mother who had five children living out in the country. She didn't have a husband, and she was destitute. It was raining, and ice was on the ground. The red clay road was slippery as we drove out. A couple of the children were out on the porch with very few clothes on.

We met the mother in the bare-looking living room where the center of attention was an old pot-bellied wood heater. The other children were around the stove, except for a little fellow who was on a small bed against the wall.

Harold explained to the mother that we had heard of her troubles, that he was a minister, and that we wanted to see if we could be of help. We could hardly feed and clothe ourselves, but God filled us with a desire to share what we had with them.

It was a bold thing to do, but we asked her if she would let us have the children, maybe just the one who was so sick. She definitely would not. We left and went straight to the grocery store and bought as many groceries as we could

afford. One thing I remember Harold especially wanted to buy was some apples. As we drove from the house after delivering the food, we both knew this was our calling from the Lord.

Not many days after that, the little sick boy died, and the State took the others. I often think of that mother and wonder how it all turned out. I know she had her faults, but she did love her children. I would like to think that she got her life together and was able to raise them.

We ended up back in Port Arthur with Harold doing carpenter work. He quit going to church because when he went, it bothered him. He knew he was called to preach.

Brother Oscar Perkins, a wonderful pastor, was so faithful to visit. It came to the place that Harold would watch for him and he would slip out the back door while Brother Perkins was knocking on the front door.

At first I would be so embarrassed that I would make excuses for Harold, but after a while, I told Bro. Perkins the truth, and he understood. He kept on visiting, and did some serious praying. We had joined his church, and he was our pastor.

Harold finally became so miserable he went to find Bro. Perkins late one night. He wasn't at home, but Mrs. Perkins said he was at the church. When Harold got to the church, it was all dark, but he saw Bro. Perkins' car there. Harold quietly went in and heard Bro. Perkins in his study praying. He was calling Harold's name out to the Father. That was it! Harold gave up.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16*

During this time we had bought a piece of land in Nederland, a little town just outside Port Arthur. Land was cheap, and we planned to build a house. When we moved, Bro. Perkins told us about a new little church there and introduced us to the pastor.

Brother A. L. Wallace became one of our dearest friends. He was the pastor, but he also worked at one of the refineries. He studied God's word and helped create a hunger in Harold to study also. When Bro. Wallace got up to preach, he would tell the congregation to open their Bibles, and then he would proceed to quote it word for word. He was a kind little man who helped us learn about the Lord.

The next pastor who came to Hillcrest Baptist Church was a very young man; in fact, he hadn't been married very long. He was skinny with a shock of black unmanageable hair. His name was Manley Madison Beasley. Hillcrest and Nederland were never the same. He didn't read that well, and some words, he

couldn't even pronounce, especially "balloons." He said, "blooms." But he was yielded to God. This was his first pastorate; in fact, it was his only pastorate. He preached on faith and trusting God for the impossible. God so anointed him that people were getting saved all over town and joining Hillcrest.

We were learning that we could trust God in all things. Sometimes Harold would take off from work and just go to the church to study and pray. It was not unusual for Harold, Manley Beasley, and some of the men of the church to pray all night long.

Harold had a burden to learn God's Word, and he started out by going to the nursery of the church and reading the Junior Sunday School quarterly to learn the Bible stories. When I think of where he started and where he went in his knowledge of the Word, I am amazed. Only God could have done that.

Brother Ed Greig said the first time he met Harold; he was sitting in a chair in the corner of the nursery studying a little quarterly. Harold would always tell me that he was a baby in the Lord, and that was where he belonged.

Our faith became so encouraged that we knew God could do anything. I remember one night we were going from Texas to Mississippi to spend Christmas with Harold's mother. It was cold and raining. Our two girls were warm in the back seat, which Harold had made into a bed for them. We had about fifty miles more to go when the car suddenly just died. It was pouring rain and getting colder by the minute. A man who happened to be a mechanic came around the curve and stopped to help us. After he checked under the hood, he told us we should walk across the highway to a motel and rent a room for the night. He would see what he could do the next morning.

We only had enough money to get to "Mommies's" and back home – nothing extra. Harold made a good living, but we were still paying medical bills from Sherilyn's birth. (She was close to twenty years old when we finally finished paying for her.) The mechanic was very nice, but he didn't know that we didn't have any money to rent a motel room. By this time the car was getting cold inside, and the girls were starting to cry.

My husband got under the hood of the car and touched the motor. His cousin, who was with us, asked me what he was doing. I said, "He's praying." Harold slammed down the hood and jumped into the car. As he turned the switch on he said, "Let's go!" Off we went straight to "Mommies's" house. When we drove into her yard the car died, and it had to be pulled into town the next morning to the shop. Oh yes, it didn't cost us anything to get it fixed because Harold's cousin owned the shop! The Lord takes care of His little children who trust Him!

Harold loved being a carpenter and would have been content with that life, but he could not get away from the call of God. Manley was preaching on faith and trusting God in all things, and Harold and I were practicing what Manley was preaching.

Looking back, the most surprising thing was that we thought that every child of God was experiencing the same things. We didn't think these things were unusual for Christians.

The day came that Harold had to make a choice to either continue life as it was or obey God's call on his life to preach the Gospel. He decided he would follow God and trust Him to take care of us. We sold our house, paid off all of our bills except the medical bills, loaded up everything we owned, and headed for a little Junior College in Newton, Mississippi. God told Harold that this was what He wanted him to do.

We didn't know you were supposed to register ahead of time and be approved. All we knew was that the Lord had told Harold to go to Clark College in Mississippi. We didn't know a soul there. There have been many times during our marriage when Harold would ask my opinion about something, and I would give it; but if he said God told him something, then I knew that was the right thing to do no matter what I thought.

We weren't four miles down the highway starting toward the college when we noticed rain up ahead. I began to cry because every stick of furniture we owned was in that trailer; in fact, everything we owned was in that trailer! It wasn't covered with anything but a loose tarpaulin. Harold would just keep singing and telling me not to be upset, that God wasn't going to let our furniture get wet. We had about four hundred miles to travel, and it rained behind and ahead of us, but not one drop fell on us.

When we got to the college campus, the clouds were black, and lightning was flashing. Harold saw a big tin building under a hill, and he sped into it. Immediately, the heavens poured out, but not one drop fell on us.

I know we must have been a sight to behold – a young couple with two little girls pulling a make-shift trailer with a little Nash Rambler. But we were so happy. We knew we had made it down this "Path" and God had prepared the way. Harold went to talk to the Dean about enrolling. The man was shocked. They were not prepared for us. Here we were with hardly any money and no place to even spend the night.

All Harold could say when he was being questioned was that God told us to come there to school, live by faith, and pastor a church. The Dean explained that preachers had been there for years and didn't even get to preach every Sunday,



much less pastor a church. But nothing discouraged either of us because we knew what God had told Harold.

The school had no place for us to stay, but then they remembered that there were some vacant rooms upstairs in the old girl's dormitory. That was good enough for us; we were thrilled to death.

In a few days a student duplex became available. It consisted of a small living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and a back porch. We gave the girls the bedroom and we took the living room.

Dolly Jean was in the second grade, and the school provided a day care for five cents a day for Sherilyn. This way, Harold and I both took classes. We rotated the housework. I was still the cook, but he did the dishes.

He worked for the school for fifty-five cents an hour (that wasn't much even back then.) I wanted to get a part-time job because that's what all the other preachers' wives did. That was an insult to my husband. He thanked me, but he said he would rather depend on the Lord.

Oh, I forgot to mention that the Saturday after we got to the college on Monday, Harold drove into a little service station to get some gas. An older gentleman began talking to him. He had guessed that Harold was a preacher from the college, and he asked him if he was preaching anywhere on that Sunday. We didn't even know of a church to attend.

He told Harold that he was the district missionary and his wife was sick. He was supposed to preach at a little country church out of Bay Springs. He asked Harold if he would be available to take his place.

The "Path" got wider. We found the church with no trouble. Harold had only preached four times in a church. Most of his preaching had been done in the jail. I don't remember what he preached, but they responded to every word. That night the same thing happened, but at the close of the service they asked if we would step outside.

As we stood on the steps outside the building, we were both so upset. We didn't know what we had done wrong, and we almost just got in the Car and left. But Mr. Windham came out and asked us to come back in. They had called Harold as pastor, and wanted to know if he would accept!

It had always been just a part-time church. That is, they just had services every other Sunday. We had never heard of such a thing, and Harold told them he would be their pastor if they would have services every Sunday. They readily agreed.

That Monday, Harold was the talk among the preachers on campus. It was even put in the school paper. A couple of them got him off to the side and wanted

him to tell them about his connections. He did, too! He told them he had connections with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!

While we were at that church, the Pentecostal church asked him if he would preach for them on Sunday afternoons. He invited them to visit us. They did about every other Sunday. Of course, they sat on one side and our people on the other, and God just blessed us all.

I think the biggest offering we ever received was \$21.00, but our car would be loaded down with groceries every Sunday night. God enabled us to feed a good many families on the campus. We never had any extra money. I guess one of the things that hurt the most about that was that the ice cream man came on campus every day and rang a little bell. Sherilyn's little friends would run to get an ice cream, but we had no money for that. She loved baked sweet potatoes, so when I would hear the bell, I would call her in to get a hot, buttered potato. If she ever missed the ice cream, she never complained. To her, hearing that bell meant sweet potato time.

The spring semester was coming up, and we didn't have any money for the school bill. We didn't know anything to do but pray. We knew the Lord would provide our needs; it was the wants I worried about. But we went ahead and asked the Lord anyway. Someone might not approve of this, but we asked Him if He would provide for our two little girls to have new Easter dresses and maybe an Easter basket each. We never told anyone but the Lord about our need.

One day as I came in from class, I found a letter in the mail box. In it was a cashier's check from someone we didn't know, and it was made out to Harold Brown. He took it to the bank to see if it was good, and if he could cash it. All he had to do was prove he was Harold D. Brown. After we paid our school bill and bought dresses for the children, we had enough to get them each a basket. We even had a few cents left over! We strolled down the "Path" with such peace.

## VI

After those college days Harold became a mission pastor out of our home church in Nederland, Texas. How the Lord blessed! We still knew there was a Children's Home somewhere down the "Path," but we didn't know where or when we would come to it. We almost always had an extra child who had a need in our home. The mission soon became a church, and Harold was pastoring and doing carpentry work.

One day he told me the Lord wanted him to pastor full-time. As I remember, our little church was renting a nice house for us and paying us fifty dollars a month. We could live on that as long as Harold worked as a carpenter

foreman. That fifty dollars didn't go very far when he quit work, but the church was growing, and people were being saved.

No one but God knew our needs. One day when I cooked breakfast for Dolly Jean and Sherilyn and got them off to school, there was nothing in the house to eat but a can of spinach and a can of beets. I was so upset because I didn't want the children to know. I knew that when they got home from school, they would have to know.

I could do nothing but worry. Harold asked me to ride with him to the little church, and he left me in the car while he shoveled gravel and sang, "Have Faith In God." I just sat in the car and cried. I thought that God didn't care about us anymore.

When Harold got through with the gravel, he wanted us to visit a couple who had just gotten saved. I sat in Catherine's kitchen and visited with her as she baked a cake. It was so hard not to break down and tell someone about our trouble, but God gave grace.

We made a few more stops, but we had to get home; it was almost time for the girls to get home from school. Harold was still singing "Have Faith In God," and I was still worrying and teary-eyed. When we arrived at our house and tried to open our front door, we couldn't. We peeked through a window and saw the most groceries outside of a store I had ever seen! The living room, dining room, and kitchen were full. On the dining room table sat that cake that Catherine had been baking. A neighbor came over and took some of the food to store at her house because we didn't have enough space for all of it.

That night I told Harold that I thought the only thing we didn't get was a box of salt. We got in bed and someone was knocking at the front door. It was Betty Jo, one of our members, and she told Harold that the Lord had told her to bring something else to us. She then handed him a box of salt! The reason I am sharing these experiences is to show how the Lord dealt with us through the years, teaching us how to trust Him in all things.

There came a time after the children's home was established, that we had thirty-four children, and Harold and I went to bed not having one thing to serve for breakfast. We would think back on the morning we had a can of spinach and a can of beets, and how that afternoon God had multiplied it. There has never been a meal missed at Fair Haven Children's Home. Sometimes it got there just on time, but it was never late! We never had to hint to any man about our needs. We stormed Heaven and got desperate before God; and when the answer came, He got all the glory. He never answered the way we thought He would; He always did it His way, and it's been wonderful!

After that early experience, I never cried or worried about God's providing for our needs. I did often remind Him that this Home was His idea, and that He was responsible for it.

*God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.  
1Corinthians 1:9*

## VII

Our dear friend, Manley Beasley, struggled through some agonizing months as he realized God was calling him to resign his church and go into full-time evangelism. He got the victory and surrendered during my and Harold's first paid vacation. We had taken our daughters camping in the woods on a little creek called Beach Creek. On our first night there, we had just gone to sleep on our cots when we were awakened by the lights of a car coming down the trail. It was Manley. He came to pray because he had to get this matter settled. For the next three days, Dolly Jean, Sherilyn, and I played in the creek and fished while Harold and Manley stayed in the woods praying. I guess they thought the Lord couldn't hear them if they didn't speak loud enough to echo through the hollow. They almost scared the poor armadillos out of their wits!

Manley got the victory, surrendered, resigned his church, and joined our church, Calvary Baptist Church. Our church had already had tremendous growth. Harold had baptized about 127 people that first year. Manley had been our pastor, and now Harold was his. We lived not too far from our extended families and where we were both raised. The "Path" seemed straight and clear ahead.

We were extremely close to the people in our church. Most of them had come to know the Lord under Harold's ministry. We often laughed because when some of them got sick, they would call Harold before they called the doctor. Harold didn't laugh so much when he ended up delivering a baby. He was a good pastor; he loved them, and he was loved in return. He laughed with them and cried with them, and even fixed their flat tires. He gave insulin shots, vitamin shots, and, as I said before, even delivered one of their babies. I could write a whole chapter on that event alone, but I won't because that was very embarrassing to my husband. The ladies who helped him always said they would have given anything to have had a camera to show how many colors his face turned!

One day Harold told me the Lord wanted him to go back to college. We were to go to Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana. I was shocked because that meant we had to move and leave our wonderful church family. I could not believe that God really wanted us to leave this place we loved and where we were so loved by others. I knew in my heart that if Harold said "God told him" that God



had really told him, but I was in Louisiana almost a year before I accepted the fact that I must be content in whatever STATE I was in.

*...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Philippians 4:11*

Harold told the church that during the weekdays he would be in Pineville, Louisiana going to school for a semester, and that we would be moving over there in a few months. It was another step of faith. We didn't know anyone there, but we knew that God had told Harold to go. To me the "Path" was rocky, and I was stumbling everywhere.

During the semester when Harold was driving back and forth to the college, he found a place to park the car in the woods a few miles out of Pineville. He slept in it at night and made a fire to cook his meals. He showered and shaved in the boys' dorm at the college. One day he was called to the office, and they wanted to know his local address. I think they knew where he was living, because when he hesitated, they told him they wanted him to move into the dorm at no expense.

Our last day at Calvary Baptist Church was one of the saddest days of my life. Harold sat in his office for the last time. I know he was hurting, too. When it came time for him to make out his offering envelope the Lord impressed him to give all the money we had. He did, and didn't tell anyone. When we left for Louisiana the next morning, God had more than doubled the amount Harold had given.

The men of our church moved us to an upstairs apartment not far from the college. When they got us all moved in, they looked at Harold and said, "Now preacher, let's move you back home." Oh! How I was wishing Harold would say "yes" that we could go back home, but he didn't.

The second Sunday we were there, a church in Alexandria called Harold as pastor. We had a good ministry there for four years, especially with the young people.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1*

We had a heart-breaking experience while we were in Alexandria. We were taking care of an unmarried expectant mother. She was going to let us adopt the baby. She went into labor about two weeks too early, and the little baby boy just took a few short breaths. We named him Thomas Harold. We held him in our hearts, but we never got to hold him in our arms because, by law, he wasn't ours. There is a tear in my eye and an ache in my heart even today as I write this. There were a lot of questions and tears from both of us before we were able to accept this

as God's will. Our tears were so many that we could hardly see the "Path," but it was still there, and comfort came from the dear Holy Spirit.

## VIII

### **Aunt Emma and Mary**

I first met Aunt Emma and her daughter, Mary, through teaching a children's Bible class in their home. Aunt Emma's skin was like ebony, and her hair was snow white. She always said it was blooming for the grave. She was a big woman with the strongest, most loving arms.

Mary was big, too, but I never saw her out of the bed because she was partially paralyzed and blind. She had been a night club singer when she got sick. She would always stop anyone who prayed for her to receive her sight because she said God had to blind her to make her see.

On Saturday mornings I went over to Sam Town where they lived, but I always had to find someone to drive me. Harold told me I could go if I wanted to, but not to ask him to EVER go. I had been going to Aunt Emma's a good while before anyone in our church knew it. Some of the people got upset and had a meeting with Harold about it. They didn't want their pastor's wife and his little girls in Sam Town.

One day Harold had a serious talk with me and I cried and cried because he didn't seem to understand how much this meant to me. I was so hurt because, as the president of the Women's Missionary Union, I could pray and give money for missions to Africa, but I couldn't go across town to teach the children about Jesus. But more than that, I was thriving spiritually on the blessings from praying and worshipping with Aunt Emma and Mary. When Harold saw my hurt, he said I could go, but he said he never would.

One Saturday I got stranded without a ride home. I didn't plan it; but then maybe I sort of did. Anyway.....Harold had to come and get me. He told me to meet him out front; he wasn't coming in. When he drove up, Aunt Emma stretched out those big arms and went to meet him. She said, "Oh, Reverend Brown, we's been praying for you." She made Harold come in to meet Mary.

That was the beginning of one of the most blessed times down the "Path." Harold couldn't stay away. He brought everybody he possibly could to meet Aunt Emma and Mary. We would pray and sing and fellowship in the Lord for hours. The people we brought would bring others, and thousands got blessed in that little shot-gun house in Sam Town.

When we moved back to Texas we would bring people by the bus load to meet those two dear people. Years later, when the Lord gave us our two little boys, Timothy and Michael, I had the great honor to have Aunt Emma in my

home. I got to serve her and cook for her. This great woman of God rocked my babies and prayed over them. I have been most blessed by God. I imagine when Harold met Aunt Emma in Heaven; she stretched out those big arms again and said, "Oh, Reverend Brown, we's been praying for you!"

## IX

### **Back to Texas**

I was so happy when I saw the "Path" winding its way back to Texas. The Lord placed us in a little church in Jasper, Texas. Did we ever learn to trust God there! The people were very attached to the former pastor. They accepted us pretty well, but we just didn't measure up to what they had before. We learned to pray and be what God wanted us to be no matter what people thought about us. These were lessons we had to learn to prepare us for Fair Haven Children's Home.

It was at this time that Harold became very discouraged and told the Lord that he was not preaching anymore. He told the Lord if this was all there was to preaching, he was through. He left the house, went over to the church, and told me not to disturb him unless it was a dire emergency. He didn't come out of that church for three days and two nights. For some reason, Harold had always felt that he would live only until he was thirty-two years old. This came to pass, spiritually, that week at Adams Memorial Baptist Church, because he was thirty-two years old, and he had such an experience of the presence and blessing of God that he died to self. When he came home after those three days and two nights, he was not the same man, and never was again. He did quit preaching (himself) – and from then on he let the Lord do it.

The next Saturday morning he was preaching on the street corner in downtown, Jasper, Texas, while our girls, one of their friends, and I sang and passed out tracts. I thought I was going to faint because I was so embarrassed! It was wonderful, though. After a few Saturdays, people started listening, and I don't know how many got saved. We ministered in the jail and out at the lake also.

A man from Shreveport, Louisiana, heard Harold preach, and he bought us a P.A. System. (It almost got us put in jail for disturbing the peace!) The District Attorney accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and surrendered to preach. Some men in our church did, too. Several people from our church, however, quit coming to town on Saturday mornings because they were not too excited about what their pastor was doing. God was using us and, all the while, also working pride out of us. We were rushing down the "Path" rejoicing all the way. Every day was a new adventure.

## X

One day, we looked down the "Path" and saw a sharp turn. This just could not be! God had been blessing!

A church for which Harold had preached a revival back in Louisiana, was wanting him to be their pastor. He told them that he was where God wanted him, and he didn't intend to leave Jasper. When Harold stood up to preach the next Sunday in our church in Jasper, God didn't seem to be anywhere around. Harold seemed to be on his own for a couple of weeks, and he was doing some intense praying.

One Wednesday, just before prayer meeting, the Lord seemed to reprimand him about not even praying about the church in Louisiana. Harold asked the Lord to let them contact him one more time. Just then, he heard the telephone ringing. It was a deacon from Friendship Baptist Church in Louisiana. He told Harold that the people in the church asked him to contact us one more time. Would he come and preach for them? Harold told him he would be there the next Sunday.

Only one or two of the deacons wanted us. We had never accepted a call to a church at which the call wasn't unanimous. Since Harold had preached a revival meeting in this church, we knew many of the people, and now, their long-time, beloved pastor was resigning to go into full-time evangelism, and most of the people wanted Harold to take his place.

The opposing group had selected a spokesman to let Harold know how they felt. On Saturday night before the Sunday we went to pastor the church, that spokesman had a stroke and never uttered another word in his life. We stayed at Friendship Baptist Church for two years, and it was a mixture of heaven and hell. We had some extremely bazaar experiences, but also had so many blessings.

Our greatest blessing was that the Lord gave us our two little boys, nineteen month-old Timothy, and four month-old Michael while we were there. About a month before we got them, Harold came running from the church over to the house. He had been praying in the church, and he was coming to tell me that the Lord had shown him we were going to get some children. He said he didn't know how many, but he knew it was more than one. I got so excited because I knew that when Harold said God had told him something, it was a sure thing! At this time we had never heard about these two babies. The "Path" was brilliant.

At this time, Dolly Jean was a senior in high school, and Sherilyn was fourteen. Sherilyn was as thrilled as we were, but the idea of two babies had to grow on Dolly Jean. She became very close to them as they grew older, though.

I could write a whole book on our experiences at Friendship. It was there that we learned to do battle with the forces of Hell, and we saw the Lord triumph over evil. It was needful that the "Path" should go this way. I don't think we



would have ever left this church when we did if Harold had not been afraid for me. I had never encountered Satanic opposition like we were encountering, and I didn't know how to handle it.

We still knew that somewhere on this "Path" there was a children's home of Faith, Hope, and Love. Some of the people in the church shared our vision. One lady met with her children, and they agreed to give about a hundred acres of land for a children's home. We thought surely this must be the place, but when Harold walked around it and prayed, he knew it wasn't God's plan, so he had to refuse the offer.

## XI

A church in Harlingen, Texas called Harold as pastor. By this time, Dolly Jean was married to a minister she had met in College, Mel McClellan. Harold and I, along with Sherilyn and the boys, made the long trip to the Rio Grande Valley. Our car stopped running right under the city limits sign of Harlingen. Harold looked up at the sign and said, "This is going to be either my longest or my shortest pastorate. We stayed there six months. I loved the Rio Grande Valley, but Harold was miserable.

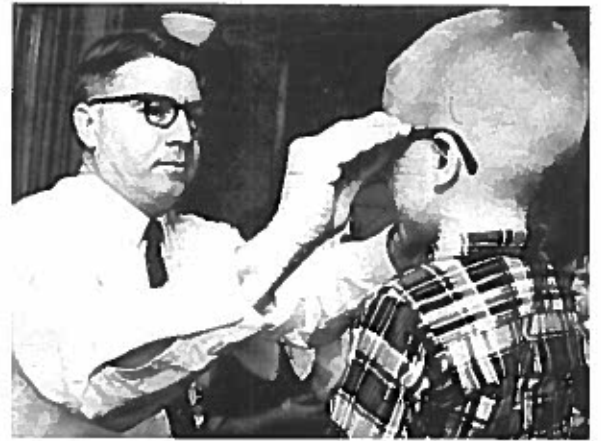
Our little church was mostly made up of business men and their families who were very concerned about the prestige of the church. Most of the people Harold and I would witness to were Mexican; in fact, we took a homeless Mexican girl and her dying baby into our home. I was shocked when some of the leaders told us that when we brought her to church she should stay and keep the nursery. We were also told we were not free to invite the Mexican people to our church. It wasn't easy, but we accepted it; but every chance we got, we went to the little local Mexican church. We were so blessed by the Lord even though we couldn't understand the words. We could definitely feel the sweet presence of the Holy Spirit there.

We lived in a very nice parsonage in a beautiful part of the city. Appearances were very important to these people. I have to say, we came to love most of them dearly, and they loved us in spite of some of the things Harold did. I guess he felt that he was supposed to help God take some of the pride out of them, so most of the time, he wore some old khaki-colored overalls and rode an old beat-up motor scooter all over town. He loved it when he would drive up to one of their businesses, and they would have to introduce him as their pastor. He came very close to wearing those overalls to preach in one Sunday. The short time we were there, God honored and anointed Harold's preaching.

We had been there only a couple of months when the Lord showed Harold we were to move the next June when Sherilyn got out of school for the summer.







He began building a trailer in the back yard of our house to use to move our furniture.

We had made some dear friends in the valley. Our problem was that we were probably out of God's will, but then, we learned from that experience. Harold learned to fast and pray while we were there. I think he was like the children of Israel; he hung his harp in the willow tree. He never had a song while he was in the valley, but on the way out, he was singing to the top of his voice. He said if God ever planted him somewhere again, he was going to take root and stay.

## XII

Sure enough, a little rural church in Covington, Louisiana, called Harold as pastor. He was planted and grew in that area for twenty-nine years. His next move was into Heaven.

When we went to Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, we thought the "Path" was just taking a little angle for a ways. We really had in mind that the "Path" would probably lead us back to Central Louisiana.

The first Sunday of 1966, while someone was singing a special in church, the Lord let Harold know that it was time to start the children's home. He could hardly wait to get to the pulpit to tell the people. He said, "God just told me He was going to start the children's home this year." After services, one of the men in the church was standing outside the church door, and Harold heard him say, "Who does that fool preacher think he is, 'going to start a children's home'?" Harold put his head around the door and said, "I didn't say I was going to start a children's Home. I said that God said He was going to start a children's home."

We went over to the parsonage so excited. The "Path" looked straight and long. But all of a sudden, we both realized we didn't know how to start a children's home; so we took what money we had, which was hardly over two dollars, and we knelt down and prayed a simple prayer: "Lord, we don't know how to have a children's home, but here we are, and here's our home. If you'll send the children, we'll have a children's home."

God did lay on our hearts that we were never to take help from the state, and that we were not to solicit for funds. We were to tell Him and only Him about our needs. We were also to have a home, not an institution.

This was a surprise because Harold thought about other ministers and how God had blessed as the preachers would travel and share the burdens of their ministries. People would respond, and needs were met. This was not to be God's way for us. We were not worried because we knew this was God's perfect will. We locked our hands together and happily walked the "Path" God had for us.

Two weeks later a man called from Houston, Texas, and wanted to know if we would take his four children. My sister-in-law was their neighbor, and she had told him about us.

We were elated. The children were from three to nine years old. As the man sat in our living room and talked, we realized that he had left an eleven year-old step-son back in Houston. He thought we wouldn't want him because he was always running away and in trouble. Harold told him to go back to Houston and get him because we did want him. It was Lee. The Lord took Lee home when he was thirty-three years old. His three children spent a part of their childhood on these forty acres. His son fished in the same pond his daddy fished in when he was a little boy. God gave that little run-away boy from Texas a home; not only a home on earth, but a home in Heaven because he received Jesus as his personal Savior.

Before we moved out of that three bedroom, one bath parsonage at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, we had thirty-four children. This wasn't the way we planned it at all. We had in mind that the Lord would first give us the land and a house, and then the children. Our ways are not God's ways.

The coming of the new children was a thrilling thing for Harold, Sherilyn, and me. Sherilyn was in her last year of high school. To Timothy and Michael, however, all these children were a shock. They had our full attention for five years, and now they suddenly had to share us and everything they owned with these strange kids.

One day I was watching through the window as the little ones were playing. All at once, Steven picked up a brick and started chasing Michael. The others joined in. Michael was running to the house as fast as those little short legs could carry him. He didn't see me at the window, and I was trying not to interfere. Suddenly Michael stopped and knelt down on one knee, lifted his hands to Heaven and started praying. He said, "Lord take Mary Beth, Beverly, and Steven to Heaven — and keep them there!"

I did a lot of praying and crying in those days, too. I would tell Harold that I just could not take care of twelve children (that we had at the time) by myself. Harold had to go to work as a carpenter because our little church could not afford to pay a man enough to take care of all these children. He was such a good carpenter; he always had more work than he had time.

The day came that we had eighteen children, and I loved them all. I loved how the Lord was blessing, but the "Path" was a little hazy to me. I was physically exhausted. I would cry at night and tell Harold that I just couldn't go on. He would pray that the Lord would give me strength. The Lord would answer his prayer, and before we knew it, we had twenty-one children.



That was when I decided that Harold was going to have to stay home and help. People would call wanting him to work, and I would tell them he was too busy right then. Harold didn't know why he wasn't getting as many job offers. I didn't tell him what I was doing until a few years later.

Now that he was having to stay home and help take care of the children, he cried along with me. It wasn't easy, but it was wonderful just to see how God worked and to be a part of it. Harold made a room out of the car-port of the parsonage. Eighteen boys slept out there.

### XIII

In 1967, the Lord showed Harold that He was going to give us land for the children's home. We still felt, even though we had a good many children, that the home would be situated in central Louisiana. I think that was because that was where we personally wanted to live.

My husband preached a good many meetings in the Washington, Oregon area, and he loved the beauty of that part of the country. One of those churches extended him a call to pastor, and wanted and offered to relocate the children's home there. It was tempting, but we knew the Lord wasn't in it.

One day when Harold was in the barber shop, a man asked him if he was still looking for some land to build the home on. He told Harold that he knew of forty acres for sale out in the middle of some woods about five miles from where we were living. There was no road to it – just an old wagon trail.

Harold didn't think too much more of the conversation because he was leaving the next day for a revival meeting in Oregon. A few weeks after he got back home, the Lord spoke to his heart and reminded him that He was going to give us the land that year. Then Harold remembered the conversation at the barber shop. He asked one of the deacons in the church, Brother Hezzie Sharp, to go with him to look at the land. There were forty acres. They walked over it, and they turned over an old hewn-out log and knelt down and prayed. Harold told Bro. Hezzie that this was the place.

Harold went to see the man who owned the forty acres to check on the price. The price was very reasonable, but we had so many children, we didn't know how we could feed them from one meal to the next, much less pay for the land. The beautiful part of it was that Jesus gave us such sweet peace, we honestly never worried. We knew that we belonged to God, and He was the One who told us to do this. It was all up to Him to take care of everything. We never missed paying a bill, and neither did we miss a good meal. The "Path might have been full of some pebbles, but we just kicked them lightly out of the way and walked on.

Speaking of bills, we promised God we would not borrow money or tell people our needs. One Friday it was Mrs. Haley's payday. She helped me five days a week, and her salary for that week was twenty-five dollars. Her quitting time was three o'clock in the afternoon, and it was now about 2:45. Harold was gone to help someone, and I realized I didn't have one penny to pay Mrs. Haley. I had been talking to the Lord about it for about three hours, and I was getting anxious. I felt it would be a bad testimony against the Lord if I couldn't pay her. I didn't want Mrs. Haley to think God couldn't pay His bills on time.

A man came knocking at the front door. I don't remember if he even told me his name. He asked me if my husband and I were the ones who took in children. I told him "yes" and invited him to come in for a minute, but he wouldn't. He seemed to be embarrassed, but said, "You're going to think I am crazy when I tell you this." I assured him that I wouldn't think anything was strange.

"Well," he said, "Let me tell you what happened to me. I'm a seaman, and I was pretty far out on the ocean, and the Lord told me when I got into New Orleans, I was to go to Covington and find the preacher who takes in kids. Then the Lord told me to give him this." He handed me an envelope.

I held the envelope and tried to assure him that neither I nor anyone at our house would think he was crazy. We were learning how God uses unusual situations to meet His children's needs. The man wouldn't come in the house and didn't wait for me to open the envelope. It was such a sweet blessing: when I peeped inside, there was twenty-five dollars – not a penny less and not a penny more. Mrs. Haley had no idea how close she was to not getting paid. I hadn't told her a thing. It was three o'clock when the man left and time for Mrs. Haley to go home.

When I handed that money to Mrs. Haley, I was almost walking on air. I told her all about it so that she could share in the blessing of just knowing God's faithfulness. We might think sometimes that God's going to be late, but He's always on time.

Mrs. Haley was a very special lady. She was with us for almost thirty years. She retired three times and quit almost every Monday morning. No one would blame her because our laundry room was unbelievable on Monday mornings.

As I mentioned before, we lived in a three bedroom house with one bathroom. I bathed the small children three at a time in the bathtub. We had thirty-four children before we were able to move into our big house.

But let me go back to the time we bought the land. Harold told the man, Mr. Jenkins, that he felt that the Lord wanted us to buy the forty acres. Mr. Jenkins said that another man wanted to buy the land to raise race horses on. Mr. Jenkins said he would much rather have children raised on it.

Then Harold told him that he didn't have any money, but if it was all right, he would have a \$500 payment for him in about a week. We prayed and trusted the Lord. We didn't tell anyone, but we certainly talked to the Lord about it. The \$500 was due on Monday morning, and when Sunday came, we didn't have one dollar extra. That night as people were leaving the church, a lady gave Harold an envelope and told him not to open it until he got home. There was the \$500 – just in time, not too late! Our faith soared, and the “Path” was bright.

Harold promised Mr. Jenkins he would pay him for the land in the next few weeks. He decided, even though he had said he wouldn't do this, that it would be all right to borrow the money from the bank. He started to go into the bank that our church used, and the Holy Spirit urged him to go across the street to another bank. He didn't know anyone in there. It was not the reasonable thing to do.

He met with the person in charge and asked for a loan of \$13,000. The man asked how he was going to pay it back and Harold said, “By faith.” The banker told him he would have to meet with some more people, but he didn't really think it would be done. Harold didn't own anything for collateral; it would just be on his name. We had only lived in Covington for two years. The officials of the bank met and decided to ask Harold if the church or some men in our church would co-sign for the note. Harold told them he would not ask anyone to do that.

They called him a few days later and told him that they would loan him the money, but it was very unusual, because they said they certainly could never take the land back and leave children homeless. It was a miracle and a shining “Path” that day.

In about a month when the first payment was paid, and Harold realized how much interest he was paying, he told me that this borrowing wasn't of God. So we began paying double notes, and the land note was paid early. We ate a lot of beans and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. We never borrowed money again. The Lord used that situation, however, because we made good friends, and many people saw that we were honest.

### **Opposition**

Oh yes, we had some opposition! The strangest thing about it was that it came mostly from the Baptist churches in the area. It hurt us, but there was nothing we could do about it but just press on. We had so many stories told on us, that sometimes it was funny. Harold never tried to defend himself. He always said that time would tell the truth.

One church had a meeting because they thought we might try to join their congregation, and they didn't want us. Some had special meetings with the purpose of stopping us from having a children's home.

Harold had a little paint horse named Penny. He loved that little mare, and he put her on the land before we moved up here. One day he came up to take care of her and found her dead. She had been shot. He called the sheriff's office, and several men came out. They asked Harold if he had any enemies, and he told them "yes." Harold knew that one of the men standing in front of him had been in that meeting, so he told him to go back and tell the rest of them that if they thought that killing his horse would stop the children's home from being built, they killed the wrong one. He also said that even if they killed him, it still wouldn't stop God.

We eventually became a mission of Milldale Baptist church in Zachary, Louisiana. We had our own services at the children's home, though, and people in the community came and worshiped with us. We baptized in the river and the tale got out that we were trying to drown the children. I'm thankful to be able to say today, that some of those same churches who so opposed us in the beginning have been our friends now for many years and have helped the home many times.

#### XIV

In January of 1968, the Lord told Harold that He was going to give us a house. While Harold was preaching at the Milldale Bible Conference, the Lord asked him if he had done all he could do. Before he had left for Milldale, Harold had asked me how much money we had, and I told him that we had \$1.47. The Lord showed him that he was to take the \$1.47, buy a ball of string, and stake out the house.

The next morning he called a friend, Bro. L.C. Terrell, and asked him to meet him at the land. He was going to start the building. He had some old pieces of lumber, and with that ball of string he staked the house out, and they knelt to pray. Harold said, "Now Lord, I've done all I can do. If You'll send the material, I'll work." The Lord provided the money for the foundation to be poured. So many men in the community came and helped!

While the concrete was setting, Harold was alone, and the devil told him that was all there would ever be – just a foundation – and that he was a fool. The very next morning, Mr. Poole from Poole's Lumber Company called and told Harold that he had heard of him, and they wanted to black the house in. I cannot tell you how the "Path" glowed!

Mr. Smith from Smith's Hardware in Covington called and said he wanted to provide all the windows. Building materials began coming in, and volunteers flowed in to help. It was amazing, and we were not soliciting. We were praying, and the Lord was doing it all. The "Path" was a Glory Road.

There were trying days at home. It seemed that I was forever hanging clothes on the line to dry. I had one three week-old baby, and there was no such thing as

disposable diapers. I'm sure there were, but we couldn't afford to buy them. Later on, we had six babies in diapers – CLOTH DIAPERS!

The two worst things about the clothes line were that after hanging out nice white sheets, the line would sometimes break, and sometimes my hands would nearly freeze to the clothes in the winter. But our dear Lord always gave "special grace." One day a cub scout group came out and they had purchased a dryer for me. That was a most blessed day!

Through the years, I don't know how many times that I anointed the washing machine and dryer with oil and prayed for them to keep working. I guess the Lord might have smiled about that, but He honored it. After several years, the Lord laid it on the heart of a man in New Orleans to give us a big commercial washer and dryer. They weren't new, but some twenty-odd years later, that washing machine was still being used.

One time when it was broken, I had to call the company to come and work on it. It was \$100 per day plus the parts if any were needed. The man working on it laid all of the little parts (screws, bolts, and nuts) out on the floor. The children were going in and out of the laundry room. After he got the machine fixed and was putting it back together, he discovered that an important screw was missing, and he would have to go back to New Orleans to get one. That would be another \$100. I got the children together and told them we had to pray and hunt that screw. We searched and searched, even out in the pasture. Finally we formed a circle and prayed desperately. Just as we said the last "amen," one of the smaller boys looked down on the ground, and there was that screw right there in the pasture. I knew that one of the little ones must have picked it up to play with it, but you must know that it was a miracle to find it on forty acres. When I remember these instances, it builds my faith to know how Jesus cares and loves us.

*(I HAVE JUST BEEN STANDING AT MY KITCHEN SINK DOING THE DISHES AND LISTENING TO "THE PEAVY'S" SINGING "THE GREAT EVENT." THE SONG SPEAKS OF MEETING OUR LOVED ONES AGAIN. I PICTURED MY MEETING WITH HAROLD IN HEAVEN, AND I FELT SO LONESOME TO SEE HIM. THEN GUILT FLOODED OVER ME BECAUSE I KNOW I SHOULD WANT TO SEE JESUS FIRST. I TOLD JESUS HOW SORRY I AM ABOUT THIS AND ASKED HIM TO HELP ME. HE DIDN'T SPEAK AUDIBLY TO ME, BUT IT WAS AS THOUGH HE DID. HE SAID, "DON'T FEEL GUILTY FOR BEING SO LONELY TO SEE HAROLD. HAROLD HAD TO LEAVE YOU, AND YOU MISS HIM. REMEMBER, I HAVE NEVER LEFT YOU." I'M SO GLAD HE UNDERSTANDS, AND THAT HE IS WITH ME. I DON'T KNOW HOW I COULD STAY ON THIS LONELY "PATH" WITHOUT JESUS! THE "PATH" HAS LED INTO THE WILDERNESS, BUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE I SEEM TO GET A GLIMPSE OF JESUS' FOOTPRINTS IN FRONT OF ME.)*



## **Back to the Building**

The house was all blacked in – with windows, too. Harold knew there were two things we needed before we could move in. We needed heat and bathrooms. He talked to Mr. Wall, who laid ceramic tile. Harold told him we didn't have any money, but that he would be paid by the first of January. I think this was some time in November. Mr. Wall was to tile two huge bathrooms and two small ones.

Harold talked to Mr. Edsell Jones and told him basically the same thing about the heat. Mr. Jones put in the ducts for air conditioning but didn't put the air in. That only became a reality a couple of years later.

The men worked as agreed, and the first of January came closer and closer. We were busy talking to the Lord about it. The two groups were finishing at about the same time. Mr. Wall talked to Harold and told him that his men were going to have to be paid. Harold reminded him that he had promised payment by the first of January, and we still had three more days. We didn't have one penny to pay those two huge bills.

On December 30th, a check for \$5,000.00 came from a man we had never met in Oklahoma. Our faith soared. We later learned that Bro. Jimmy Robertson, the pastor at Milldale Baptist Church, had told the man about us.

Harold went to Mr. Wall and asked him how much we owed him. He knew right away, and Harold paid him. Mr. Edsell Jones had to add his bill up, but in about an hour he knew how much we owed him. Harold paid him, and we had one nickel left over. The "Path" was as bright as a sunshiny day! We had told no one but God what we needed, and He spoke to a man in Oklahoma to help us. God is so faithful!

When we moved into our big house, it was a long way from being completed. We lived for a long time on concrete floors in a house with only black felt on the outside, but we had enough bathrooms and bedrooms. It seemed like a palace to me. Some of the children missed the old house. I don't know why, but I suppose it was the closeness of being together all of the time. I never missed it!

All of the children except the babies had their special chores. Most of the children we raised at that time grew up to be responsible workers and good parents. We raised all of our own beef and pork. We were never blessed to raise chickens. We had a huge garden. We milked our own cows. The children (most of them) liked the raw milk, but the state inspector told us we had to pasteurize it. The children didn't care for it when it was pasteurized. One of our little girls told me one day that she only liked Borden's milk, so we named one of our cows "Borden" so she could have "Borden's" milk.

By this time, our daughter, Sherilyn (Sissie) was living with us because her husband, Johnny, was in Vietnam. Her first child, "Little Johnny," was born a few days after we moved into our big house. Sherilyn is the blessing of my life. I guess all mothers think their daughters are the greatest, but I know mine is. The Lord has given her and Johnny the same burden for children that He gave Harold and me. My husband's greatest desire was to live for others. For the most part, he did. But Sherilyn is a person given completely over to living for others. It is almost a fault, because she neglects her own self too much. I am amazed at her.

Getting back to our new house: There was still a lot of work to be done on it. The older children were so good to help with the younger ones and to clean the house. We met for prayer every night in our big living room. Most of the time the prayers lasted so long the little ones would fall asleep and the older children would pick them up and take them to their beds. We had an old goat bell, and when it was rung, the children knew it was either time to eat or time to pray.

This reminds me of one little girl we had who, when she was asked to say the blessing, she would pray for everyone at the table. One night she prayed so long that Stephen said, "Amen, Mary Beth, Amen!" After he said this about three times, she finally said, "Amen." The food was cold, but it was blessed. Prayer has always been a vital part of this home.

One day as we were sitting at the table finishing our dinner, Steven asked where he had come from. I had already been thinking of how I would answer these kinds of questions, but I was embarrassed that he had asked it in the presence of so many of the children. I proceeded to tell him about the birth process as truthfully as I could, being careful not to go into more detail than I felt a seven year-old could handle. I felt a little pleased with myself as I finished. Steven had been very attentive, and the others had also. He looked at me with those big eyes and said, "You know, Mama, Aunt Rose told me that I came from Texas!"

As I said before, we were living in our big house, but it was a long way from being finished. A special group in the telephone company planned to brick the house. (That is, to pay for the brick and the labor.) But the house had no porches – the outside wasn't finished enough for the brick to be laid. So we had to wait.

One day a young couple came to visit us. They drove up in an old car that didn't look like it would go five more miles. They were definitely "Flower Children," or as my husband called them, "Hippies." The man could hardly speak English. He was from Switzerland, and she was American. They had a very young baby which she was openly nursing. Harold was embarrassed and was turning every color in the rainbow, but it didn't seem to bother her.

They began to tell us their story. They had traveled from Switzerland to attend the Woodstock Festival. While they were there, someone told them about Jesus, and they got saved. This was told to us mostly by the wife because of his

limited knowledge of English. The most we could understand from him was that Jesus had saved him, and he kept pointing to himself and saying, "Miracle."

After they were saved they left the Woodstock meeting and came to the Covington area to visit her relatives. As they were telling them what had happened in their lives, one of the relatives told them that there was a man in Covington who believed as they did, and they gave them Harold's name and directions to our home. They visited for several hours and then got in that old car and headed down our dirt road. As we waved good-bye to them, Harold said, "You know, God sent them here, and it wouldn't surprise me if they went back to Switzerland and start a children's home."

A few months later Harold was at a Milldale Conference. As he was praying, the Lord showed him the building completed on the outside. Harold told some preacher friends about it, but said that he must leave and come home because I was sick.

He had told me earlier that it would take three thousand dollars to get the building ready to brick. So that's what we were praying for. Remember, we never told anyone but the Lord what we needed. I went to the post office the next morning and opened a letter. In it was a check for three thousand dollars, and you know where it came from? – that little couple from Switzerland!

## XV

Even though we were in our big house, it still wasn't easy. Living with a bunch of children was something else. We had so many laughs and a lot of tears, too. I wish I had the memory to recall all the sayings and incidents from over the years.

I remember one day when seven year-old Michael brought his reader home from school and began reading to me. He just read beautifully, and I was so proud of him. Then he said, "Now would you like for me to read it with my eyes closed?"

Mary Beth, who was five years old, came to me one Sunday afternoon and said, "Mama, Jesus spoke to my heart during church."

"Oh," I said, "and what did He say?"

"I don't know," she said, "but it made me so sad."

"Sad about what?" I asked.

"About all the mean things I've done."

I realized then that the Holy Spirit was convicting her. We knelt by the bed and she asked for forgiveness, and asked Jesus to come into her heart. The sweetness of God's presence was all around.

It wasn't too long after this incident that her mother and her mother's boyfriend kidnapped her from us. My husband saw them just as they started the car. The car hit him and knocked him down. Thank the Lord, he was only bruised a little! The police did all they could do to help find them, but it was several years before we ever heard from her again. I wonder so often how different her life would have been if we could have raised her.

We had our big house with nice bathrooms, but we lived on concrete floors. They are not easy to keep clean! We needed seven hundred dollars to pay for the floor tile. The Lord told Harold that he could order the tile, so he did, but we didn't have any money. A couple of days before the tile came in, the Civitan Club voted to pay for it. We knew the Lord would pay for it, but we just didn't know how, or who He would use.

That month fewer contributions had come in than we had been given in a long time, but people were bringing groceries, and the pantry was full. Our Lord supplies all of our needs. He is a faithful God!

We wanted to abide by the laws, so we applied for licensing and were approved. We had to make reports each year because of health and safety laws, which are actually good. The Lord gave us favor with the social workers in Covington, and many of them became close friends, especially a wonderful lady named Meda Koepp. I think we were licensed for 41 children, but we almost always had a few more than that. As long as the social workers didn't get them all together and count, we were safe. We didn't want to break any laws, but sometimes we just couldn't say "no" to children who needed a home.

A newspaper reporter wrote an article about us and told how many children we had. Harold met Meda in town and she said, "Preacher, honest to God, how many children do you have?" Harold said, "Meda, I promise you we have 41 children." We did, too. He just didn't mention how many more than that were here at the time. I think the most we ever had was 52.

Things changed with the government regulations, and after a few years we were put under the New Orleans area. A social worker from New Orleans who reminded me of a storm trooper came to see us. When she saw that we had children under two years old, she told us we couldn't keep them. We kept them anyway.

Later on we went to the capitol in Baton Rouge to lobby against the new licensing laws. I don't remember just how it all happened, but a bill called "The Fair Haven Bill" was passed, and we have not had any real trouble since then. My husband was introduced at the legislature, and he was given a standing ovation.

Our first house was completed and full of children. The boys lived in the front section, and the girls lived in the back. By this time, the Lord had sent us help. Our daughter, Sherilyn, and her husband, Johnny, were house-parents to the girls. As my husband's health was getting worse, God sent house-parents for the boys. It had to be a call from God because none of the salaries were big. In fact, the first seven years that Johnny and Sissie (Sherilyn) were here, they took no salary, but they lived on the income from his driving a school bus. Harold and I never received a salary from the home. As Harold's heart condition worsened, we received a V.A. check each month because he was a disabled veteran. This was a blessing to us, and many times it helped pay the bills for the home.

Harold believed in discipline. He was a preacher who believed right was right and wrong was wrong. No gray areas! To him, not disciplining a child was child abuse. He also believed in a lot of love and hugs.

We didn't have money to spend on vacations. Almost every Sunday afternoon Harold and the boys played Cowboys and Indians on their horses. There were six thousand acres of open space in front of our 40 acres for them to play on.

We went to the Bogue Chitto River to swim. We had so much fun, but as I look back, I am so thankful for God's protection. That river is a dangerous one, but we did have fun.

One time one of our older boys fell off his horse in the woods. It caused his ear to turn black for about a month. That spot where he fell became known to us as "Black Ear Gulch."

I'll never forget the day the Johnson brothers arrived to live with us at Fair Haven. They were excited because we had horses. We warned them to be careful around them.

Mrs. Johnson's car was hardly out of sight when one of our most gentle horses kicked Curtis in the face and broke his jaw. He was a tough little boy, and he didn't even shed one tear. This concerned the doctor because he knew Curtis was hurting. He spent a few days in the hospital, and the Lord used it to help us get to know him. About a year after this, Curtis got hurt again – nothing serious this time. Harold took him to the doctor, and Curtis was crying his little eyes out. The doctor was pleased that he was crying because he said he was more normal now.

Let me tell you about our pediatrician, Dr. Ronald Hardey. We had taken several of the children to him and he charged us the same as all of his patients. One day Sissie and I went to New Orleans to pick up two children because the mother had no way to bring them to us herself. The little girl, Jeannie, was two years old, and the little boy was three weeks old. Jamie was his name. His skin was so dry it was flaking off on my black coat. He had side burns that looked like whiskers. To tell the truth, he looked like Abraham Lincoln. (He grew up to be a nice looking man.) The next day I took him to Dr. Hardey. This baby was a pitiful mess. He



had not been circumcised, so that had to be done. Dr. Hardey had a lot of other work to do on him, too. When I got ready to pay the bill, I asked how much I owed. Dr. Hardey said that I could not afford this bill, and from then on, he treated our children free of charge – an answer to prayer.

## XVII

In August of 1978, our first house burned to the ground. That was a most horrible night. We think it was caused by some wiring in a hot water heater. We lost many possessions, but not the most valuable. Not one child was hurt. Fire trucks came from everywhere. Some of them had to take water from the pond. We came very near to losing two houses. The older boys stayed on the roof of the second house hosing it down with water.

This house was where the boys and their house-parents, Huey and Ocia Collier lived. The older boys were so brave and responsible. They got all the little boys out very orderly. We had twin boys, and one of them, George, went back in the house twice and lay down on a couch in the living room. The smoke was so thick it was a miracle we got him out the second time. While they were fighting the fire, I herded the little boys over to the chapel to pray and to keep them safe. Of course, we were all so scared, and one of the little boys kept crying, "Why did God let this happen to us?" I have to say that I was wondering the same thing. But God kept reminding me of the Scripture in Romans that says, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." That Scripture came so true. God used that fire in a mighty way. We had no insurance, so we truly had to trust God for another house.

Another couple who was living in that house, Don and Jo Payne, lost everything in the fire. Our boys lost all of their clothes except the ones they had in the laundry room. The girls shared their clothes with them for a day or two.

When we had built our chapel, Harold had said he believed God wanted him to put bathtubs in the bathrooms. It didn't seem logical at the time, but after the fire we knew why. Our boys had to move into the Sunday School rooms, and they had full bathrooms. Now, isn't the Lord good? He provided for us before we had a need.

After the fire, people came from everywhere to help us. Some of them had never heard of Fair Haven Children's Home before. The slab from the first house was still good, so Harold and all the help started building with a good foundation. In three or four months, the boys had a new house, and it was completely paid for.

Today, Fair Haven Children's Home on these forty acres is still a busy place. We still have cows and little calves, but we don't milk them anymore. There are four large brick buildings, one little house kind of under the hill, a very large metal

building and a huge concrete slab. When the weather is nice, the busiest place on the grounds is that concrete slab. There are skates, skateboards, balls of all kinds, basketball goals, bicycles, and every kind of riding toy you can think of. It's a fun thing. The most blessed thing about this is that it was all paid for as or before it was finished. We only borrowed that one time to pay for the land.

## XVIII

Around 1980-81, the doctors told Harold that because of his heart condition, he should no longer live with the children. He was going to have more heart surgery. We picked out a spot on the back pasture to build us a little house. Harold wasn't able to do much of the physical work, but he was in charge of it, of course. It was built mostly by our older boys. This is where I live at the time of this writing. There are so many happy memories in this little log house. Looking back down this "Path" as I do now, I see so much laughter, but also many tears and heartaches.

The last month of Harold's life, on this earth, was spent in the hospital. The closer his "Path" got to Heaven, the more he talked of the preciousness of Jesus. His last sermon could have been entitled, "Jesus Is Precious".

The one fear or maybe dread is a better word, was the actual pain of death. He never feared the Valley of Death because he knew he'd not be alone, Jesus would be with him. Jesus was so precious to him. Jesus let the doctors put him to sleep for the surgery and then let him wake up in Heaven...no sting of death...The Lord is so good and faithful.

There were about twenty-five of us in the waiting room that night. About 11:30 P.M. I felt something leave me. I cried out and everyone knelt and prayed. Two hours later, the doctor came out and told us they were unable to get Harold's heart to beat again after the surgery. He told us that he was so shocked when he looked at Harold's heart (Harold was only 64 years old) because his heart was the heart of a hundred year-old man. I knew why – because it had been broken so many times. I also knew that it had been used more than normal to pour out love to over 300 children who had lived with us over the years.

I knew when "Our Path" separated. Harold's Path took him into the presence of Jesus. My Path is long and lonely without Harold.

Before Harold went into that surgery from which he left this world and entered Heaven's gates, I promised him I would finish the book about our "Path," and that is what I am trying to do; but you know, I am still on this "Path," and I'm walking slower. But miracles are still happening at Fair Haven.

Before his death, when Harold had some legal papers drawn up, we laughed when he had put in them that we were a "world-wide" ministry. He felt that the

Lord wanted him to put that in, though. The Lord knew this "Path" was going to go from this forty acres around the world.

A few months before Harold went to Heaven, we were watching a documentary on television. It was about the Romanian orphans, and we saw this little crippled girl, naked and scooting around on her bottom. We both had tears in our eyes, and Harold said, "I wish we could help children like that." God made that wish come true. Through a series of crooks and turns, that little girl lives here at Fair Haven today.

Our daughter, Sherilyn (Sissie) and her husband, Johnny, are the directors of the Home now. I'm thankful to be here and still have a part in the Lord's work. I am so blessed!

## XIX

About two or three months after Harold passed away, I received a call from a local hospital. They thought we might be interested in taking a young boy from Romania who was in the hospital. I didn't know a thing about it and I told them that we didn't usually take children like him. He was fifteen years old and mentally handicapped.

Sherilyn, Johnny, and I talked it over, though, and agreed to take him for two weeks and see how things would turn out. His name was Sabastian. He became the angel in our home. Oh my, not an angel at first! He tried to take every picture off the walls. He was skinny and tall, and not even potty trained. At the time we had our hands full, but after two weeks our hearts were full! He never met anyone he didn't love, and never forgot their names.

He was a young man, so Johnny was the one who had to care for his personal needs. The bond became as strong as a son and a father for them.

One day after Harold was gone; I was feeling sorry for myself. I thought, "I'll never hear anyone call me beautiful again." I'm not, but my husband thought I was. That was the very day I met Sabastian. I introduced myself to him and told him that my name was "Sweetie." (This is what my grandchildren and all the children in the home call me now.) Sabastian looked at me and called me "Beauty." I tried to correct him, but to this day, I'm still "Beauty" to him.

It took some time, but we found that Sabastian actually had parents in Romania, and that they loved and wanted him back. After two years of corresponding with them and a little investigation, Johnny took him back to Romania. It was extremely hard for Johnny because Sabastian was like a son to him. It was hard for all of us because Sabastian was truly the angel in our home.

When Johnny came back from Romania, he was a changed man. He came back with such a burden for that country. Sherilyn and I decided we were going to

Romania to see what was going on. Just three weeks after Johnny came home, all three of us packed up and traveled to a country that we came to love. After we had been there for seven days, Sherilyn and I caught the same vision that Johnny had.

## XX

I have been to Romania three times now, and have been blessed each time. I don't know that I will ever get to go again, but my prayers travel over there everyday. Fair Haven has become a channel of blessing to so many people there. I stand amazed at what God has done.

About the time our Romanian ministry was beginning, Sherilyn's youngest daughter, Jeannie Rose, was in college in Lynchburg, Virginia. In one of her classes, she asked for prayer for her daddy who was going to Romania. After class a young man told her that he was from Romania, and He had a younger brother who had some medical problems. He wanted to know if we could possibly help him. Through that meeting, we met this young man's family, and they have become a vital part of this ministry. We were able to bring the young man's brother to the States and get him the medical help he needed.

We met another young man who was in a Romanian orphanage and had lost his leg in a train accident. His name is Adrian. We brought him to Fair Haven, and he will soon be an American citizen. He now wears a prosthesis and is able to work and care for himself.

There is no way I could tell you all of the things that the Lord Jesus is doing through Fair Haven in Romania, but I must tell you a little about Elana. Elana is that little girl whom Harold and I saw in the documentary. She was brought to California from Romania and placed in several institutions. We were contacted to see if we would be interested in her. We prayed about it, and our attorney was going to California for a visit and offered to go and see her.

His report was not a good one. He said she would not be like Sabastian; she would not be responsive to love. We tried to forget about it, but every night for several weeks I went to sleep with thoughts of her. I asked Sherilyn what she thought about our flying to San Diego and meeting her for ourselves. The first hour that we were with her, we both thought that there was no way we could help this child. We planned a picnic for the next day, and I stepped aside to let her and Sherilyn be together and see what would happen. They really bonded. Through a lot of red tape and legal procedures, Sherilyn was able to fly back there and bring Elana home to us.

She will never be what is considered "normal," but she is loved and well taken care of, and she even pitches a fit now and then when she doesn't get her way; and I must say, "That's normal!"

The word "Fair Haven" did not translate well into Romanian, so the ministry over there is known as "Hope for Others." Johnny is completely in charge of it and is doing a wonderful work. I know Harold is pleased with its name because his life was a life lived for others. On his headstone I had the words of his favorite song inscribed:

*Others, Lord, Yes, Others  
Let This My Motto Be.  
Help Me To Live For Others  
That I May Live Like Thee.*

This "Path" has been very long. Sometimes I can see way up ahead, but many times I stumble in the dark. But I am still on the "Path." At this time the sun is shining so bright on the "Path" and it seems to be meandering upward. But I am not walking alone. My Savior is very close.









