

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

As Seen By A

RETIRED

COLONEL U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVES

WHO IS ALSO A RETIRED

COLLEGE PROFESSOR

WHO IS ALSO A RETIRED

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, COACH, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

WHO IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

WHILE GLANCING AT THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

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FORWARD

There are many men who have inspired me, challenged me, and encouraged me in my Christian walk. If I were to try and list them all in this paper I would undoubtedly miss some whose faithfulness in praying for me and encouraging me have been so real and helpful.

There are those that I have gone to church with, since the early 1960's. Some I taught high school and college with. Men who have prayed with me, cried with me, and laughed with me. Some of these men have even been instrumental in helping my grandsons grow up in their Christian faith.

I am dedicating this paper to my wife, who led me to the Lord, and modeled a Christian life for me for all of the 58-years we have been married and the four years we went to college. She is, always has been, and always will be the helpmate for me that God intended Eve to be for Adam.

In addition to my wife, Barbara, I would like to dedicate this paper to one of the men who have been instrumental in my life. William Bradshaw Paul, III, otherwise known simply as Bill Paul. Bill was such a help after I first became a Christian. As only God could work it out. Bill grew up with my wife, attended the same church for years, and became my roommate at Pepperdine University. In this paper I mention someone who encouraged me in so many ways. He was instrumental in my decision to stay active in the Marine Corps Reserves. He was instrumental in my being able to complete the requirements for a teaching credential at Pepperdine when there seemed no way I could work it out.

The life lived, as chronicled in this paper, is a testimony to God's grace. A testimony of God's ability to bring people into our lives who are so instrumental in shaping our life. Thank you all, and God Bless you all.

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Chapter 1: You can't appreciate the beginning, until you know the end.

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct your path."**

Proverbs 3:5

Like a lot of young, 18-year old men and women who have graduated from high school I had no idea about what I was going to do in life. I had no thoughts about what type of work/profession I was going to be involved in, or where I wanted to live. Looking back from where I am now I would describe myself as very 'loose.' I didn't know the answers to the questions I have referred to and in fact hadn't even asked myself those questions.

After graduating from Fremont High School in South Central, Los Angeles, when I was 17, I started my first full-time job working in an aluminum foundry. The job got me so dirty that my mother would not let me come in the house until I cleaned up, on the back porch. Like most boys that age, I never thought much about the future. I never even dreamed that 37-years after high school I would retire from teaching and coaching in high school. Nor that I would retire from the Marine Corps just 38-years after high school. And I certainly would never have dreamed that I would retire 62-years after high school after having taught at Biola University for 24-years as an Associate Professor . To quote a famous philosopher, "Who would of thunk it.!!"

If you are interested in numbers and add up the time from HS to my retirement from Biola you will conclude that I must be 135-years . You would also have to conclude that I have a pretty good memory, and my typing isn't too bad for someone that old. at my elder age. Not that you wouldn't have figured it out, but I was teaching in high school and serving with the Marine Corps Reserves concurrently.

My wife, Barbara, has encouraged me to write this paper, explaining how God has moved in our lives. Like a wind blowing, you can't see the wind

but you certainly can see the result of its movement. We can't explain how, nor certainly not why, God has led in our lives, but like the wind, we certainly have experienced the power and certainty of His faithfulness. As David said in the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd." The sheep who are led by the God of King David don't make a whole lot of plans, they just follow the Shepherd, and so have we. What a ride!!

Praying for answers to circumstances and opportunities that we are facing is something that all of we Christians, and many unbelievers experience. During World War II the terms "Foxhole Christians" became synonymous with those prayers offered by those who were not necessarily "religious" but needed help, and needed it immediately. There is a story told of a hiker that fell off a cliff and as he was falling he grabbed a strong vine protruding from the cliff. He began to pray, "God in heaven, help me." A strong voice came down from heaven and said, "Do you believe I can save you." The desperate hiker's quick response was, "Yes, I believe you can save me." The strong voice from heaven said, "Trust me, let go of the vine." There was a rather long pause and then the hiker asked, "Is there anybody else up there?" Answered prayers begin with the assumption (faith) that there is "nobody else up there." We have concluded, as we have reflected and written this paper, that Hebrews 10:6 is true when Paul wrote, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for we must believe that He is, and that he **rewards those who diligently seek Him.**"

"Psalm 111 "Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, . . . The works of the Lord are great . . .His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered."

The December 31, 2010, copy of a daily devotional booklet, 'Our Daily Bread,' included an article called, "**Rearview Mirror Reflections**," written by Joe Stowell. I quote Mr. Stowell's article below because of its poignant amplification of the importance of looking back at what God has done in

our lives and developing the confidence that, “He that hath begun a good work in us will see it through until the end.” Phil. 1:6

Rearview Mirror Reflections by Joe Stowell:

*“I’ve always thought that **you can see the hand of God best in the rear view mirror. Looking back, it’s easier to understand why He placed us in the home that He did; why He brought certain people and circumstances into and out of our lives; why He permitted difficulties and pain; why he took us to different places and put us in various jobs and careers.***

In my own life, I get a lot of clarity (though not perfect clarity—that’s heaven’s joy!) about the wise and loving ways of God as I reflect on the ways He has managed my journey by “the works of (His) hands.” (Ps 92:4).

*With the psalmist, **it makes me glad and strikes a note of joy in my heart to see how often God has assisted, directed and managed the outcomes so faithfully.***

*Looking ahead, though, is not always so clear. Have you ever had that lost feeling when the road ahead seems twisted, foggy, and scary? Before you move into next year, stop and look in the rearview mirror of the year or years gone by and joyfully realize that **God meant it when He said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’** So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.’ Hebrews 13:5-6*

With the promise of God’s presence and help in mind, you can move ahead into 2011 with utmost confidence.”

*“For you, Lord, have made me glad . . . ; I will triumph in the works of Your hand ----Psalm 92:4 **(End of Joe Stowel’s article)***

When Saint Augustine was asked the question “How can we discern God’s will for our lives?” he replied: **“If thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your soul, you can do anything you like, and it will be God’s will for your life.”** Augustine’s answer was similar to what Paul wrote in Romans 12:1-2 **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by**

the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Chapter 2: Does God answer prayer? Does God Answer Prayer? Does He Ever!!

A journal of prayers and answers would serve as a very important reminder of God's faithfulness in answering our prayers by using that journal as a way of looking in the "rear view mirror." A song says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done!"

As was mentioned earlier, we don't always know, in the short run if what we are praying for will be answered, or, maybe has been answered and the answer is 'no.' I remember a country western song that had a person going back to a high school reunion and meeting the girl he had once asked God to enable him to marry. After meeting this former high school sweetheart that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with he went home and wrote a song. A line in the song, maybe the title, said "Thank God for unanswered prayers."

I'm convinced that a great part of the "abundant life" the Bible talks about is this confidence that "the steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord." What a powerful feeling it is to believe that God is totally interested in us and does answer our prayers. To experience the truth of Hebrews 11:6, "For **without faith** it is impossible to please **Him**, for he that cometh to God **must believe that He is**, and that He is a **rewarder** of them that **diligently seek Him.**" The "reward" is a life lived with confidence, knowing that God is in charge.

The body of this writing deals primarily with God's answers to our specific prayers. In one situation I was teaching in high school. One of my former students, an accounting major at Biola University came back to the high school and said that the Business students were asked to pray for a new

Accounting Professor. This former student said that when he prayed for that accounting position he kept thinking of me. I told him, thanks, but no thanks. He asked me if I would pray about it. I said that I would, with no hesitation, even though I thought there was no way I would leave my job teaching in high school to go to Biola, I said I would pray about it, as would my wife and our good friends at church.

There were a lot of reasons that I was not very interested in leaving my high school teaching job to go to Biola. I had been teaching high school for 14-years. I was department chairman, which means I taught what I wanted to teach. It would take me much longer to commute to Biola than where I was currently teaching. I was very comfortable with my job and really enjoyed it, and it paid more money than Biola would. Why rock the boat? However, I, my wife, and many of our friends prayed for God's will regarding this position. I ended up believing that God wanted me to apply for the job.

I applied for the teaching position and was hired. While I really loved teaching at Biola it turned out to be the hardest year of my life. In order to be prepared for these college courses, seven classes that I had never taught before, I was studying about 35+ hours per week. In addition to the horrendous amount of studying I had to do in order to prepare for the classes I was teaching at Biola I was also the Youth Pastor at our church. After one year in this situation I left Biola and went back to teaching high school. **For the next eleven years I doubted whether I could really discern the will of God for my life.** I was a little confused in that I thought it was God's will for me to teach at Biola and yet it hadn't work out. I never doubted my faith, or God's interest in, or ability to lead. I just doubted **my ability to discern God's will.** I thought I had flat out missed God's will for my life.

After leaving Biola and going back to teaching in high school I was offered the job as the Athletic Director at El Toro High School. This, I thought was the reason I left Mission Viejo High School and went to Biola.

Eleven years after I left Biola University, and returned to teaching high school, the school district I had taught in for 24-years offered a very good retirement plan. This plan was meant to encourage older, higher paid teachers to retire. With this opportunity to retire early I thought that I could afford, and would enjoy, going back to Biola as an adjunct professor.

I applied for the teaching position that was open at Biola. However, the Business Division chairman was looking for a younger person who had his doctorate. I did not qualify in either way. When I left the interview and was walking out of the Administrative Building at Biola I ran into the person who had been the Dean when I taught there eleven years earlier. We talked and when I told him I had applied for a teaching position he asked me if they had hired me. I said no. He said that he was sorry and after talking for a while I left and drove home.

When I got home there was a phone call asking me to come back for another interview. The Dean that I had worked for eleven years earlier was still the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Business Division was under the umbrella of the School of Arts and Sciences and he wanted to hire me. After the next interview with the Division Chairman and the Dean, I was offered an adjunct position for a semester, to be revisited at the end of that semester. After the first semester I was offered a full time position and taught there for the next 24-years. I suppose there are better jobs in the world that some teachers might have, but, in my mind the years I spent teaching at Biola University were as good as it gets.

Finally it became clear that it **was God's will** that I taught there eleven years earlier so that I could end up teaching there for so many more years. It took **eleven years** for me to really understand that God had indeed

answered my prayer regarding my original decision to teach at Biola in 1976.

Chapter 3: Some prayers take a 11-years to answer, some take no time at all.

Another situation occurred while I was on active duty, in the Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base, 29 Palms. There was an extremely important situation that I was responsible for and I had absolutely no clue as to how it could be solved. While I was at my desk praying for God's help, there was a knock on my office door. My prayer was **immediately answered by God** sending a Marine Staff Sergeant who had the expertise and ability to solve the serious dilemma that I was in.

In both cases, taking a job at Biola and God sending a Marine Staff Sergeant to help me out, there was no doubt about what God's will was. In one situation I didn't understand, for eleven years, that God had indeed answered our prayer, and in the other I knew that God had answered my prayer almost before I concluded my desperate prayer with, 'In Jesus name, Amen!'

Ten years ago I was offered a job as the Principal of an International High School in Xiamen, China. My wife and I prayed about the offer for several weeks. It would involve retiring from my job teaching at Biola University, in my mind, the best job in the whole world, and moving to China for a minimum of two years. Our friends at our church also prayed for our decision. After praying and seeking God in this decision I felt that God was calling us to China. My wife, being the great wife that she is, wasn't totally convinced that we should go, but she went along with it. We had gone to China four years earlier with a group of students from Biola University's School of Business and were definitely fascinated with the possibility of working and living there for a while.

We accepted the job and went to Xiamen, China. We had been in Xiamen for about two weeks, looking for a place to live, meeting the faculty, seeing the school, involved in the excitement of a new experience in a brand new, multimillion dollar school, when my wife, while praying, definitely had a revelation from God. God made it clear to her that one of our daughter-in-laws was going to leave our son, and their three young sons. And, that we should be there to help our son and our three grandsons, **not working in China.**

Not wanting to leave China, but believing my wife, I had to go to the school's Headmaster and ask to be released from my contract, which he did. My wife, who recognized how much I wanted the job, prayed that God would "write His will on the wall" and/or at least reveal it to me. He didn't do either, but my wife was convinced that it was God's will and having observed her over the years that we have been married, I knew that I had to trust her judgment. Shortly after we got home the daughter-in-law left and my son was left with three young boys. When I look at the faith that these three grandsons have today, and the strong Christian witness that they have now, I know for certain that it was God's will.

Almost three years ago, one of these three grandsons graduated from Biola University and got married to his high school sweetheart, who also just graduated from Biola. He is now working as an Assistant Youth Pastor at our church and going to Talbot, Biola's Seminary. The day before his wedding, this grandson took the time to write my wife and I a letter. I am reproducing this letter in this paper as a praiseworthy result of the leading of God. As an example of how a "Rearview Mirror Reflection" can verify the leading of God in very difficult decisions. Our grandson, Dana, wrote:

"Grandpa and Grandma Dill,

We have another one joining the ranks! Another Dill on the list, and this one is most definitely a winner! I want you both to understand this before you experience the wedding, see the slideshow, hear the vows, witness the friends that are present and all

the other aspects about this wedding; everything good and praiseworthy and honoring to Jesus that you see tomorrow, tonight, or any days to come, or things that I do has been a direct result of what Jesus has done through the example and ministry you both have been and given in my life. I can say with confidence, this praiseworthy statement, 'I am who I am by the grace of God in Christ through you both.' You have been the hands that have led me to Jesus, you have been the eyes that have helped me to see His glorious beauty, you have been the mouth by which I have come to taste His riches, you have been the cup from which I have taken a drink of His living water, you have been for me the means God has used to illustrate the gospel to my sick heart. Please be blessed tomorrow as you see Chawna and I wed in His name and blood of Jesus and know with clarity that Christ in us is because of Christ in you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, In tears, Dana Glenn Dill."

This note that we received from our grandson is not included in this paper to glorify my wife and I, but it is included as a very poignant example of how God goes before us, directing us in ways that sooner, or sometimes later, validates our trust. God said, "The just shall live by faith," and what a blessing it is when God chooses to show us the end result of our decision to leave China, a decision based on God's revelation to Barbara. What a thrill it is to know that our creator, the creator of the heavens and the earth, is interested in our lives, That He listens to and answers our prayers. That He directs our steps. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and **He shall direct your paths.**" God certainly doesn't want us to live in the past but remembering how "faithfully" He has led in the past encourages us to have hope for the future. Looking in the 'mirror of our life,' seeing how faithfully God has led in the past, strengthens our faith for the future.

I am not an example of-----the typical high school student who went to college after taking college prep classes, and was encouraged by his parents to go to college.-----**but**, by the grace of God I did go to college

I am not an example of---the typical young athlete who was successful in high school athletics and was encouraged to continue in college

-----**but**, after working full-time for a year, I went and played with more success than one would have any reason to expect.

I am **not** an example of----the typical young athlete who was awarded an athletic scholarship to play football in college

-----**But** I attended Pepperdine on a full athletic scholarship

I am **not** an example of---the typical USMC Colonel, tall, tough, intelligent, handsome, ----**But**, I am a Colonel who retired with 32-years of active duty and reserve time.

I am **not** an example of----the typical college professor---scholarly, research oriented with a doctorate -----**But**, I was an Associate Professor at Biola University for 23-years.

What I am is an example of-- the Grace of God at work in the life of a young man who, at 19-years of age, had his life transformed by the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

My wife of 58+ years (it will probably be 60+ years before I finish this paper), has been asking me to write this story, about how faithful God has been in our life. Each of the jobs, positions, assignments, promotions, and experiences that are mentioned in the paper came about totally by the **"Grace of God."**

Chapter 4: We definitely don't walk alone!!

"The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the Lord is the One who Holds his hand." Psalm 37:23, 24

One of the main reasons I am writing this paper is to encourage young people. To help them realize that growing old isn't bad, but rather exciting, if you are trusting God. The 'great' benefit of growing old, having trusted

God, is to be able to look back and see how clearly God has answered your prayers.

Every young person has questions like: Should I go to college, if so which college, and what should I major in? Where shall I work? Where shall I live? Whom shall I marry?

Billy Graham once said that 70% of life's difficult decisions are made by young people between the ages of 18 and 22. What a blessing it is to see how God leads in these difficult decisions.

One of my sons accused me of being a bad example to my grandsons. Because, one day, when they were young, they were helping me clean out my garage and we came across one of my old high school report cards. I told them that my high school grades are a testament to the faithfulness of God directing our lives even though we sometimes make dumb decisions, like not studying. With God, all things are possible, even with bad grades.

A few years ago I went to a high school reunion. When a lady that I had gone to school with heard that I was a college professor she said that she never thought I would ever go to college, let alone become a college professor. I told her that as the song says, "It is no secret, what God can do." I am writing this paper to help young and old people to have faith that this song **"It is no secret, what God can do,"** goes on to say, **"What He's done for others, He will do for you. With arms wide open, He'll welcome you, what He's done for others, He will do for you."**

I mentioned earlier that I was 17 when I graduated from high school and began working in a foundry. When I turned eighteen I went to work in the aircraft industry, close to the Los Angeles International Airport. The company, North American Aviation, made airplanes for the Air Force (F-86D's). At \$1.65 an hour I made enough money to move from my parent's home into my own apartment.

While working at the factory, I met a friend that I had gone to high school with. He was in the process of going back to El Camino College to play his second year of football. I thought, how awesome that would be to play football again, though, in reality, I had not been very good in high school. I asked my boss at work if I could get transferred to the swing shift so I could go to college during the day. The transfer was made to the 'swing shift,' and I began my college life with a schedule that involved going to my classes at 8 a.m. to-12 p.m., practicing football 1-4 p.m., going to work at the aircraft plant from 5 p.m.- 2.a.m. The only good thing about this schedule was that the coach would let me leave early and miss the most endearing part of practice, 'wind sprints,' so I could get to work on time. If my first accounting professor at El Camino College heard that I was a college professor teaching accounting he would probably turn over in his grave, in disbelief. Again, **with God**, all things are possible.

It has been said that "ignorance is bliss," if so, I might be one of the more "blissful" people around. Logically there were questions that I certainly couldn't answer, didn't even think to ask myself, like:

- (1) What made me think that I could play football at the college level when I played so little on my high school team,
- 2) How did I think I could maintain a schedule going to school, playing football and work a full, 8-hour shift at the plant.
- (3) Since I had not done well, academically, in high school, what made me think I could succeed in college, especially given the schedule I would have to maintain.

While I wasn't an active Christian at that time, I now believe that a decision I had made in the 8th grade, to go forward at a Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade at the Hollywood Bowl, was the point in my life when I became a Christian, and God began to lead. My parents did not go to church, nor did any of my friends and until I met my future wife, I did not attend church.

Since I had not gone to church, read the Bible, or had friends who did, I did not mature in my Christian faith.

This decision to go to college, as it turns out, was very definitely God's plan for my life. God wanted me, as he wants all of us, to meet Him on a personal, life changing level. It was going to take my going to college, meeting a particular young lady, playing football, and working nights to accomplish that, so God worked it out.

The second obvious work of God in my life happened at a football scrimmage between El Camino and Compton College. I had gone out for quarterback, a position I unsuccessfully went out for in high school my senior year. During the scrimmage, the Compton College tailback, a returning Jr. College All-American, was running over all our linebackers. The coach, turned to the bench and in frustration, yelled, "Don't we have anybody here that can play linebacker?" As it turned out, the two linebackers who were on the field had been high school All League players. Since I had played linebacker, with some success on the **10th grade football team**, even though I was trying out for quarterback, I said that, yes, I had played in high school. He told me to go in. I did, and on the next play the Tight End blocked down on our defensive tackle and the offensive tackle blocked our defense end out leaving a huge gap in front of me while their tailback was getting the ball and making plans to run over me (creating the football version of David facing Goliath). For some reason, only God knows how, I filled the hole, and hit the runner just as he was in the air, between strides, carried him back about 5-yards and dumped him on his back. The coach went nuts, and from that day, for the next two years, I was a starting linebacker and selected as the Defensive MVP on a Jr. College team that was ranked number two in the country with the best defensive record in the country, allowing 37-points in 10-games, going 9-1 (the one loss, to Fullerton JC was by one point). **Only God could have worked that out.**

The next, and most important work of God in my life happened to be the chance meeting of my future wife after a game where we played Bakersfield College, in Bakersfield. After the game I went out to dinner with a young lady and happened to meet the old high school friend who had worked with me at the aircraft plant and put the idea in my head that maybe I could work it out and go to school. My friend's date was a young lady who was a song leader at El Camino College. Over the next few weeks I asked this beautiful young song leader/homecoming queen for a date several times, (it took a long time for her to say yes), because I was not--- (as mentioned earlier), tall, dark, and handsome. But, another miracle of God occurred and she finally said yes. After each date on Saturday night she would ask me to go to church with her on Sunday. We started dating regularly and I went to church with her on Sundays, regularly.

This story is all about how God had a very definite hand in my life. So far, I am 19-years of age and gone to college with more success in athletics than I would ever have dreamed of, and I was dating the college Homecoming Queen/Song leader. You've got to see God's hand in all this. "It is no secret what God can do . . ." The next step in God's providence was a little painful. In the last game, of my freshman year, I broke my leg. This meant I couldn't work nights at the aircraft plant. Looking back now I see that I would have had to drop out of school with bad grades because with the schedule I had there was no time to study. The broken leg provided the time to study, and the football coach got me a good job on campus.

Chapter 5: New times, Same God!!

Another 'step' that the Lord brokered involved my being drafted during the Korean War. When I was drafted I had to take a pre-induction draft physical, at the induction center, downtown Los Angeles. The Army medic did such a bad job of taking a blood sample, missing the vein and searching under my skin, with what appeared to be a very dull needle, creating a huge bruise on my arm. That experience with the Army caused me to feel a

little uneasy about being drafted. I mean no offense to the Army, every country needs one.

However, I sure would like to find that medic who explored under my arm with the dull needle, *'I owe him 'big time.'* On the way back to college after the disastrous 'blood letting,' I drove by a Marine Corps recruiting office. I went in, showed them my arm, and asked them if they knew how to take a blood sample better than the Army. They assured me that they did, and I joined the Marines. You know that this has to be true, it is too wild for anyone to make up.

While I was filling out the forms they discovered that I was going to college and asked me if I was interested in becoming a Marine Officer. After the Marine Recruiter explained to me what a Marine Officer was, and how I might become one, I took their test, passed it, (another miracle of God). I was enrolled in an officer candidate program called the Platoon Leaders Course (PLC) that allowed me to have a summer job (if you call six weeks of a boot camp type environment in the sweltering heat of Camp Upshur, in Quantico, Virginia, a summer job). I completed two six-week tours of Officer Candidate School in Quantico successfully, and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, after graduating from Pepperdine University.

This story is all about God's hand in my life. Now we see that God allowed me to break my leg in a football game and then spill my blood during a physical exam, to accomplish His will. Sometimes, I guess, God's will includes some pain.

Chapter 6: New times and experiences, same faithful God!!

In July, 1953, the week before I was to fly back to Quantico, Virginia, to participate in the first of two 6-week Office Candidate School assignments, I became a Christian. My girlfriend, Barbara and I were at the beach one Sunday afternoon and I was explaining that I had received my orders from

the Marine Corps and that they had included a ticket on a United Airlines flight to Washington, D.C. and a train ticket to Quantico, Virginia. I would be flying and riding a train for my first time.

‘Actually this was the first time I would be riding a train legally. Where I grew up in South Central Los Angeles there were train tracks and we would jump on slow moving trains and ride them for a while. That kind of thinking probably accounts for the bad grades I got in high school.

My future wife, Barbara, asked if I knew what would happen to me if the plane that I would be flying to Washington, D.C. would crash. My answer was, I think flying is very safe. She told me that in 1950 her sister had graduated from UCLA, became a Flight Attendant, for United Airlines, and was killed in a plane crash in 1951. She explained that while she grieved for her sister, she knew that her sister was a Christian and that she would see her again. Of course, I felt sorry that she had suffered such a loss, but I didn’t think that my plane was going to crash.

I guess God was using Barbara to prepare my heart to hear the Pastor’s sermon that Sunday night. I don’t remember anything about the sermon except that at the conclusion he gave an altar call and God moved in my heart in such a way, showering me with His love so deeply, that I knew then that my life would be forever changed. The following Sunday night I was Baptized and the day following my baptism, I flew to Washington, D.C. and took the train to Quantico, Virginia, to begin my Marine Corps experience.

“After the Baptism the church gave me a Bible and a little pamphlet with some references to Biblical truths that would explain my new life in Christ. The only time I had to read the Bible while I was going through training in Quantico, VA, was after the lights were turned out at 2200 hours. I would take my Bible into the Head, (the bathroom) the only place where there were lights, sit on the hard, round, seat with the hole in the middle, and look up verses explaining what my decision to follow Christ was all about. The hope that had been given me and the cleansing that had taken place in

my heart, when I accepted Christ as my Lord, was so dramatic and life changing that I can still, very vividly remember the experience 62-years later. As I mentioned earlier, at my current age there are a lot of things I don't remember, but, I very clearly remember that night, the night my life really began. I had never taken drugs, didn't smoke cigarettes, (well, a cigar once in a while when I played pool) didn't drink alcohol (not very much), but, I couldn't have felt more 'changed.'" ***I had met God, on a personal, life changing basis, and I knew it.***

God's plan for my life now included a summer of reading the Bible at night, in the Head, at Camp Upshur, in Quantico, Virginia. There are several instances in the Bible where God separated people from their normal life, preparing them for His ministry. Moses spent 40-years tending sheep before God called him back to Egypt to broker a deal to "Let His people go." Israel spent 40-years wandering in the desert. Jesus began His ministry with a 40-day period of fasting and praying in the desert. God provided me with a 42-day experience, not in the desert, but at Camp Upshur, Quantico, Virginia, preparing me for my ministry.

It's amazing how God can, through the work of the Holy Spirit, change our lives. As we, on our own, in the most unusual circumstances, read His word and talk to Him, He can change our life and give us such hope.

My new life in Christ made it so much easier to endure the physical and mental challenge that you face during the trials of becoming a Marine. Regardless of what the Drill Sergeant called me. How stupid he said I was or how ridiculous it was that I thought I could ever become a human being, let alone a Marine officer. In spite of what he called me or said to me, I knew I was special because Christ died for me. A verse I had memorized while reading the Bible in the head, at night gave me such hope and peace that the DI's disparaging remarks (polite way of describing what they called us) did not bother me, in fact it became a little humorous. The verse, Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own

understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path.” This verse has become a life verse for me, giving me such hope that regardless of the circumstances I find myself in, I know He is directing my life. No matter what the DI said, I knew God was in charge of my life, I knew God was holding my hand and would not let me slip. It is really interesting how God moves in our lives, God works in the life of all His children, sometimes in mysterious ways. That summer in Quantico, Virginia, was as much of a “spiritual retreat” as it was a Boot Camp experience.

Chapter 7: For I know the plans I have for you . . . Joshua 29:9

After my second year of playing at El Camino College, I figured that my college days were over. We had players on our team that received athletic scholarships to UC California at Berkley, Stanford, San Jose State, UCLA, Chico State, etc. but I figured my college days were over. I figured nobody needed a 185 lb. linebacker with average speed so I would go back to my old job at the aircraft plant. It had been a good run. I had met a beautiful young lady that I was seriously dating, I had had a great time playing football and it was now time to get back in the real world. But, God had a different plan. After the football season was over my football coach called me in and said that one of the coaches for the Pepperdine University football team had come by and said that they were looking for a “Christian” linebacker.

I think, at the time, I was almost as excited about the coach knowing that I was a Christian, as I was that Pepperdine University might be interested in offering me an athletic scholarship. Many of us, I think, beat ourselves up a little because we don’t think we are being a “witness” for the Lord. To my knowledge I had never verbalized my “new life” in Christ but was blessed that the coach knew that I was a Christian and that he thought that I fit the description of a “Christian linebacker” that Pepperdine was looking for.

The coach said that he told the Pepperdine recruiter about me and had given them some of our game films so they could see me play. When they brought the films back they said they would like to talk to me. They did and they offered me a full athletic scholarship. God is good!! When I talk to my grandsons, who are all much bigger than I, they ask me what it was like being a 185 lb linebacker on the collegiate level, playing schools like San Diego State University, UC Santa Barbara, Chico State, Long Beach State, and others. I tell them that **though I was rather small, I made up for it by being slow.**

This story, my story, is about God working out His plan for our life. I still marvel at God's graciousness and miracle producing power of enabling me to be so successful in football that I would receive a way to pay for my education, at a very expensive university, by just playing football.

My two years at Pepperdine University provided me with the opportunity to grow in my Christian faith. At Pepperdine, as only God could work it, my roommate was a Christian athlete who was attending Pepperdine on a baseball scholarship. He had grown up with, gone to school with, and attended the same church as the girl that God used to bring me to the Lord, the girl that I ended up marrying. Pepperdine, at that time, was located about a mile from the Baptist Church where I had become a Christian. For the two years that I was at Pepperdine I was able to attend a college age Bible study during the week, taught by a lady who was about the finest Biblical scholar that I have ever known.

One of the most unusual answers to prayer occurred my senior year at Pepperdine. I needed a job. I was planning on getting married after graduation and had no money. I would have a job after I graduated, the Marine Corps, but I needed money for an engagement ring, money for the honeymoon, etc. I was at church and heard that one of the men at the church had a responsible position at McDonald Aircraft and that maybe they were hiring. I approached the gentleman and he said yes, he felt he

could help. He gave me his business card and told me to call a certain person in the personnel department. I did and that person said they had an opening on the graveyard shift, midnight to 7 a.m. This would work because football was over and I could sleep early evenings and then go to work. I went to the plant and they gave me a job.

When I reported to work at midnight, the supervisor I would be working for interviewed me. As it turned out there were only about ten men who worked that shift in the whole plant. They were responsible to correct problems that occurred on the assembly line during the day. The men who worked the graveyard shift were responsible to repair anything that broke down during the day so that the assembly line would not be held up.

My new supervisor asked me if I could weld. I said, no. He asked me if I was a sheet metal worker. I said no. He asked me if I was an electrician. I said no. He asked me if I could rivet. I said no. He asked me if I could read blueprints. I said no. He asked me if I had ever worked on engines, I said no. He asked me how I happened to be hired for this job because the men working the graveyard shift had to be specialists in the aircraft manufacturing industry and be able to work using blue prints to correct problems on the assembly line while it was closed down at night. I told him that a gentleman from church had given me his card and told me to call the personnel office. He asked me what the man's name was. After hearing the man's name, he suggested that I might bring my school work with me each night and stay hidden, out of the sight of the rest of the crew, until the shift was over.

I felt badly that I wasn't able to contribute to the manufacturing process, to earn my pay, but, I got a lot of homework done and was able to buy my wife a nice engagement and wedding rings and put some money aside for the honeymoon. God is able to do abundantly above what we ask, or sometimes, even understand.

I pray that if anybody reads this paper that they will see and understand that God is the “good shepherd” and He is faithful to lead us. As I look back at my first few weeks as a new Christian in the Officer Candidate Course in Virginia, I can clearly understand what the Psalmist said in Psalm 119, “How shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed according to Thy Word, Oh God. With my whole heart I have sought Thee, let me not depart from thee. Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

My wife of 56+years (maybe 60-years by the time I finish this paper), who, by the way, went to UCLA when I went to Pepperdine. She became a Songleader at UCLA and was first runner up in the UCLA Homecoming Queen competition. She was, and is, a definite keeper. God is so good!! When I think that she is the one who led me to the Lord and then became the mother of our three sons, and grandmother of our five grandsons, and one granddaughter, and soon to be the Great Grandmother of a new baby I am overwhelmed. Tell me God isn't good and doesn't give us more than we deserve. Tell me that He doesn't go before us, preparing the way, and that the “steps of a righteous man aren't ordered by the Lord.” (Paraphrase of Psalm 37:24). He has gone before and prepared the way, and He always will be, going before us, providing a way for those who love Him. Just look in the ‘rear view mirror,’ once in a while as you keep walking with Him.

Chapter 8: **H-o-o-o-o-o-rah**

Upon graduating from Pepperdine University I was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, got married, moved to Quantico, Virginia and life took on a whole new dimension. I arrived at Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Virginia, without my young bride who had to finish summer school at UCLA to get her teaching credential. I went to the Base Housing and learned that there were no apartments on the Base for me and my young bride. This problem was created because a Basic Class for 2nd

Lieutenant, who had all just graduated from college descended on the base and needed married housing.

However, this was another situation where God went before us. About six weeks later, three days before my wife was due to join me, the Base Housing Office called me and said that they had an apartment for us on the base. If my wife had not had to finish college and gone back there with me we would have had to rent an apartment off base, in places like Dumphries and Triangle. However, God worked it out and we had a beautiful apartment, in the officer's housing section, right on the golf course, for the next seven months while I was in Basic School (a 7-month school that all Marine Officers have to attend.)

After completing the seven month Basic Infantry School at Quantico I received orders to Camp Pendleton, California. I was assigned the duties of a Platoon Leader with the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 7th Marines. As a Christian Marine officer I felt a double responsibility. A responsibility to train and take care of the Marines in my platoon, and also to maintain a Christian witness. The first real time of testing occurred after the Infantry Battalion I was assigned to returned from a winter exercise where we took part in an amphibious landing on Kodiak Island, just off the Alaskan coast.

Just before we left for this exercise our Battalion Supply Section had failed the Inspector General's (IG) inspection. Not a good thing. When we had spare time on the ship (we were on the ship for six weeks) I spent time studying accounting because I was going to be released from active duty in seven months and I needed to use the down time to prepare for my civilian profession, accounting. The Battalion Commander would walk through the Ward Room (basically the officer's dining room on the ship) and see the other officers playing cards, watching movies, etc. while I was studying accounting. Unknown to me, he was impressed. His name, by the way, was LtColonel Pickle. When I reported in to the Battalion, from Quantico,

he said that with names like ours, we should get along very well. I assured him that I had every intention of getting along with the Colonel.

After we got back to Camp Pendleton from our training exercise on Kodiak Island, Alaska, the Colonel called me in and told me that he was impressed with my “diligence in seeking to improve myself during the down time on board ship,” and that he thought I could straighten out the Battalion Supply Section. I was an Infantry Officer. Supply Officers go to a school that lasts several months, to learn how to be intelligent, knowledgeable Supply Officers. I was scared but praise God for Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, **lean not on your own understanding**, in all you acknowledge Him, and he shall direct your path.”

I assumed the responsibility as the Battalion Supply Officer with more than a little anxiety. Shortly after I assumed this responsibility our Battalion left the Camp for a field exercise. The supply section, including me, did not participate in the exercise but were left to straighten out the supply section that a few months earlier had failed the IG’s inspection. While the Battalion was in the field my boss, the S-4 Officer sent back for a couple dozen 50-gallon water cans. We sent them the water cans. I suppose a school trained supply officer would have realized that they wanted the water cans full of water. However, I was not a school trained Supply Officer and we sent them empty water cans. I assumed that they had a watering point to fill the cans. This resulted in my most dangerous experience in this, my first tour of duty, facing the S-4 Officer. He came back in his jeep, leading the truck with the empty water cans, and I thought, for a while, he was going to use the weapon in his holster to shoot me. But, as you well know, he didn’t.

A few years later I met this officer at Camp Pendleton and rather fearfully reminded him of that incident that occurred with the “empty” water cans. He laughed as I described the incident but said he didn’t remember it.

While working with the supply section I observed that the Supply Chief, a Gunnery Sergeant, was somewhat out of uniform every day, in that he did not wear a T-shirt under his uniform. Granted, this seems like a little thing, and it was, but I felt that if he wasn't diligent in following the dress code, (Marines are a little paranoid about being in the proper uniform), then maybe he wasn't diligent in following some supply procedures as well.

While in Basic School we had a class in Uniform Code of Military Justice. There was a case where a Marine Officer was accused of being out of uniform. He was chasing a young lady down the hall in the Bachelor Officer's Quarters with no clothes on. His defense was that "he was in the proper uniform for the activity he was involved in."

The Supply Chief was not "in the proper uniform," although he was only missing a white T-shirt. The proper uniform required that a white t-shirt be visible at the neck. If you think this is a little ridiculous then you have never been in the Marine Corps. History and tradition are not taken lightly and tradition says you will be in the proper uniform for the activity you are involved in.

Right or wrong, I determined that if the supply chief did not pay attention to the proper uniform he might not give due diligence to the proper supply procedures. Reaching, maybe, but it worked out very well. I asked to have him replaced and his replacement was probably the best Supply Chief in the Marine Corps. This new Supply Chief and I talked for about 5-minutes and he said, "Lieutenant if you have other things to do, you might leave this mess to me and I will straighten it up." So, I began to work out and study accounting and became the best conditioned, unqualified Supply Officer/future accountant in the Marine Corps. In one month we had a revisit from the same IG Inspection Team that had failed the Battalion Supply section before we went to Alaska, and they gave us a rating of 'Outstanding.' I tried to convince the Battalion Commander that the new Supply Chief was the reason for the big turnaround but the Colonel thought I was the miracle

Lieutenant, and my fitness report implied that I was one of the best supply officers in the Marine Corps. Little did he know “how little I knew.” No doubt, God was on duty, not only saving the reputation of a young “Christian” Marine Lieutenant, but actually enhancing it. He does perform miracles!!

At a Battalion Mess Night, a formal dinner for the officers of the Battalion I was invited by my Battalion Commander, Lt. Colonel Pickle, to have a beer with him. I respectfully declined and asked if it would be permissible to have a coca-cola rather than an alcoholic beverage. He said fine and he drank his beer while I drank my soft drink. Later on in that evening the Battalion Executive officer pulled me aside and said that he had heard me decline the offer to have a beer with the “old man” (an endearing term for the Commanding Officer). He said that I would never have a career in the Marine Corps if I didn’t drink with my Commanding Officer when asked. That Executive Officer retired shortly after that as a Major, a very fine accomplishment. I retired from the Marine Corps Reserves 30-years later as a Colonel. Like the football scholarship I wasn’t sure I deserved, I wasn’t sure I deserved the rank of Colonel but I sure take confidence in the thought that **God thought I did.** Same great story, God is able to do abundantly more than we can imagine!!

One summer I was on active duty at 29 Palms MCAGCC, as a Lt. Colonel, and on a Sunday morning, in the field, the Navy Chaplain conducted a chapel service. I attended, as did another officer from Headquarters Marine Corps. After the service we talked for a few minutes about the Lord and serving Him in the Corps. About seven months later I got a call from a Marine at Headquarters Marine Corps, congratulating me. He identified himself as the Christian officer that I had met in the field during the exercise at 29 Palms. I asked him what he was congratulating me for and he said that he had just read, in the “Navy Times,” the list of those who had been promoted to Colonel, and my name was on it. I have since felt that God had chosen this Christian officer that I had met and talked to for a few

minutes after the chapel service to tell me of my promotion, rather than let me be notified through the normal channel. I have always felt that He chose this way to notify me of the promotion, as a reminder to me, that, “the steps (and the promotions) of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord. . . .” Psalm 37:24

Again, God had shown that he goes before us and prepares the way.

Chapter 9: Time to be a civilian worker

During the last year of my initial time on active duty, my wife worked as a 3rd grade teacher in San Clemente. We were able to save her earnings and buy a house in Monterey Park, California, and I began working for an accounting firm. I was working and going back to school taking a CPA Review course, preparing for the CPA exam. We had a family that lived next door to us that we tried to be a witness to, regarding the Love and Faithfulness of God. The neighbor was a sales manager for Smart & Final Iris. After we had lived there for a year and a half he came over one night and said that one of his clients owned several super markets and was looking for a Controller for his firm. The neighbor said that he had told him about me and that the owner of the stores would like to meet with me the following Saturday. I told my neighbor that I wasn't interested, that I had only six months left to complete the two year work experience requirement to become a CPA. The neighbor kept insisting that I talk to the gentleman and, trying to be a good neighbor, I said alright.

I don't know if you have ever applied for a job that you didn't want, but if you have, you will know how loose you can be. The gentleman who owned the stores said that they used the retail method of inventory control and asked if I had ever worked with that system. I told him no, but I remember reading about it in an accounting textbook in college. He said, that's alright, that I would pick it up quickly. After talking for several minutes he suggested that we go have a beer. I said that I was sorry, but that I didn't drink beer. He said well let's have a cup of coffee, to which I replied, I don't

drink coffee either. He said, what do you drink and I said I like milk. He said fine, you have milk while I have a beer and laughed.

He offered me the job. I told him thanks, but that I was close to becoming a CPA and needed a few more months of public accounting experience, which I wouldn't get as a controller of an organization, no matter how large the organization. He asked me how much I would make after a couple years as a CPA. I estimated a figure, on the high side, and he asked me if I would come to work for him if he doubled that pay to start. So that, ladies and gentlemen, if anyone is reading this, is why I am not a CPA. He paid me much more than I deserved, but, again, I think this was a figure that God had in mind. The pay for the job was such that when I started teaching, three years later we had purchased and paid for a house in San Clemente with a view of Catalina Island, the coastline, and the city lights. Through God's provision I not only got a great teaching assignment but I could afford to become a beginning teacher who had a wife and two young sons to support.

Hopefully it is readily apparent to whoever is reading this story that "the steps of a righteous man, are ordered by the Lord," just like it promises in Psalms 37:24.

About this time in life, in my mid twenties I really wanted to go into the ministry. However, I possess this one little problem, my grandson calls it a character flaw, I cry very easily. I cry, not only over spilt milk, but sad stories, happy stories, and I have a hard time keeping from getting emotional when I just think about how faithful God is. Hence, the water spots on the original copy of this story. The Old Testament talks about the 'weeping prophet' but I guess God doesn't need another 'weeping' minister. So, God didn't call me into the ministry, he called me into teaching.

While I was working as Controller for the grocery company I started taking night classes at California State University, Los Angeles. Two years of night

school later I had finished all the class work except for one class that Cal State LA didn't offer at night. I needed the class before I could begin the student teaching assignments that, of course, would be done in regular high school classes during the day. I thought I was at a stalemate. I didn't think I could afford to quit work for a whole year in order to finish the work on the teaching credential. However, the friend that was my college roommate was an education major at Pepperdine and knew the Dean of the School of Education very well. He called Pepperdine and talked to the Dean of the School of Education and asked if they ever offered the class that I needed, at night. The Dean said no, but maybe we could work out an arrangement with the professor that taught the class. They did and I completed the class by meeting with her every two weeks for a couple hours at night to discuss the class materials. After completing this class I found out that the professor who made student teacher assignments would not allow me to complete the two required student teaching assignments concurrently. This meant I would have to quit my job and be without a paycheck for a whole year.

While student teaching we were required to take a class with the professor who made the student teaching assignments. I, of course, was probably 8 or 9 years older than the other students because I had been in the Marine Corps and worked for several years, while the other students had probably been out of high school for only four years. I was 29-years old while they were probably about 22-years old.

I feel that God definitely intervened one day when during the class break some students were talking about the class. They agreed that they didn't understand the materials. I told them that I did, and they asked if could stay after class and explain it. I did. We stayed after class that day and while I was teaching, the professor walked back into the room. She wondered what was going on, but said nothing. She sat down in the back of the class and listened, realizing that I was teaching what she had just covered.

She stayed after the students left. The professor congratulated me on my presentation of her materials and said that maybe she could get me a **couple half semester student teaching assignments**, in addition to the one I was currently teaching, that would allow me to complete all my requirements for my credential during the current semester. In the beginning of the semester she would only allow me to have one student teaching assignment. Now she was arranging for me to have three student teaching assignments at two different schools. If God hadn't intervened I might not have ever have become a teacher.

And now, the plot thickens. After completing my last day of the three teaching assignments I had my three class roll books, grade sheets and final exams in my brief case. When I got in my car, in front of the school in Watts, a community in South Los Angeles, I loaded all my teaching materials in the car, except for my brief case. I drove to San Clemente, a drive that took about an hour, leaving my brief case sitting in the street. As soon as I realized what I had done I called the school and the secretary said, "God is looking after you, one of the students brought your briefcase to the office and that doesn't happen around here very often." ***God was looking after me!!***

Without that briefcase I would not have known what grades to give the two junior high school and one senior high school class. I probably would have failed my student teaching assignment and ruined my chances of becoming a teacher, or, at least seriously slowed the process. As it turned out, because I did not lose my briefcase, I finished my student teaching, got my teaching credential, got a job, and the week before I received my first pay check for teaching, we used up the last of our savings. God's timing is everything. Because a student turned in my brief case I was able to successfully complete my requirements and later received the "Student Teacher of the Year," award from Pepperdine University. (Not bad for a student teacher who left all his materials in the street). God is good!!

If anybody is reading this, are you getting the feeling that the Shepherd is watching out for his sheep? I am not writing this to convince you that I do dumb things, though that is a distinct possibility, but to give you more reasons to believe that God is able to do abundantly above and beyond what we can imagine.

Another incident where God intervened and we are still reaping the monthly benefits. I started teaching high school in 1962. As a typical teacher I needed a summer job. My college roommate, the same one who got Pepperdine to make an exception for me, a strong Christian brother, again intervened in my life. He called me and said that he had talked to a gentleman who was interviewing Reserve Marine Officers to work with a program during the summer at Camp Pendleton. I got an interview with the gentleman who was a Captain with the Los Angeles Police Department and a USMC Reserve Colonel. The program, called Devil Pups, is a program that provides high school students with a chance to spend 10-days at Camp Pendleton in a citizenship, physical fitness program. By the grace of God I was able to work with that program, which was located on Camp Pendleton just 6-miles from my home in San Clemente for seventeen summers. For those 17-years I reported to Camp Pendleton for active duty the day after school was out in June and completed the active duty the day before high school football practice started in August.

During my tenure, 32-years with the Marine Corps, active and reserve, I was blessed to serve with a USMC Reserve Artillery unit for several years and experience various assignments and situation in Alaska, Japan, Korea, Camp Pendleton, Coronado, San Diego Amphibious Training School, Quantico, VA, artillery school, Camp Lejeune as Chief of Staff of the 2nd FSSG, 29 Palms in various capacities including an assignment as Assistant Chief of Staff Facilities, and many other exciting experiences.

During my first tour, two years, I was an Infantry Officer. When I came off active duty I tried to maintain an active role in the Reserves but there were no billets available in any of the Infantry units around Southern California.

My old college roommate who talked Pepperdine into letting me take a class under very unusual circumstances helped me again. He was a Marine Officer serving with a Reserve Artillery Unit in Los Angeles. He talked me into joining this unit, even though I wasn't a school trained artillery officer. He said he would teach me everything I needed to know, and he did. The unit sent me to an artillery officer refresher course in Quantico, Virginia.

It was a refresher school for those who had attended the Army's Artillery School. I had not done that so it became my only experience in an artillery school. After a few years in the artillery unit I was promoted to Major and there was no billet available in the unit.

A few years later I was contacted by Headquarters Marine Corps telling me that I was selected as a Force Artillery Officer for Team Spirit, an annual joint exercise with the Korean Marines in Korea. Here was another opportunity to fall on my sword because I was, in no way prepared, to fill a billet like that. I had a friend who was with an artillery unit at Camp Pendleton and he said that he could get me several publications that would help me become prepared for the position. By the time I got to Japan to board ship and sail to Korea I felt fairly confident in the billet I was to fill.

While we were in Okinawa, Japan, a couple officers and I went in to Naha City to shop and have dinner. After shopping we found a restaurant and went in to have dinner. We couldn't read the menu so we politely walked with the waitress and, as discretely as possible, ordered our meals by pointing to what people were eating. When we finished eating we were commenting to each other about how this Japanese food tasted so much like Chinese food. A gentleman sitting at the table next to us asked if something was wrong with our food. We replied that no, as a matter of

fact it was very good. Our surprise was that the food tasted so similar to Chinese food. He said, "Sir, this is a Chinese restaurant."

Things aren't always exactly as we think they are, but the constant in the Christian's life is that God is always who He says He is. He is the provider of life, and that more abundantly than we can imagine.

One summer, while working at 29 Palms Air Ground Combat Center, I had been tasked with building a tent city in the middle of the desert to provide living quarters, mess halls, shower facilities, etc. for a Reserve Marine Brigade (7,500 Marines) that would be flying to 29 Palms AGCC from various Reserve Marine Training Facilities all over the country for a two week live firing Brigade exercise. The assignment involved planning and supervising the building of temporary quarters, 500 tents that sleep 16 Marines each, all the support facilities which are necessary for feed them, provide showers, etc. Looking back on the assignment I think I shouldn't have been selected because I was not an Engineering Officer.

Looking back on my interview for this assignment I feel that God definitely wanted me to have that experience because I had the funniest interview I have ever been involved in. The Brigade Commander, a Major General was the officer I interviewed with. During our conversation he mentioned that a couple years before they had had a similar Brigade exercise and that they had a real problem with (what I thought he said), 'snake bites', but what he really said was 'stake'bites. When the large tents are built they are held up with guide lines (ropes) that are attached to very large, steel tent pegs. When the steel tent pegs are pounded into the ground with sledge hammers the ends of the tent pegs fray. When this happens the frayed top of the tent pegs are razor sharp. At night when Marines walk around the tents if they bump the frayed tent pegs it cuts them, sometimes quite badly. The General and I were discussing this problem and I mentioned that while I had spent several weeks at various times in the field on the base, I had never seen anyone have a problem with 'snake' bites. After a

couple minutes I asked the General if he would spell the kind of bites he was alluding to and he spelled 'stake.' When he found out that I thought he was talking about "snake" bites he laughed and thought that the misunderstanding that we had was very funny and hired me for the job.

Building this tent city was the most complicated, difficult assignment I have ever been involved with. Among other things the building of the camp involved the moving of 33-telephone poles from another location about three miles away. Planting them in the ground and then running several thousand feet of wire from generators to the telephone poles linking the power to the living quarters (tents), dining facility, shower facilities, work spaces for the Marines to work on their equipment from individual weapons to jeeps, trucks, tanks and other crew served weapons. As time went by and the needs were further analyzed, I felt that I was way over my head. I obviously lacked the professional training and experience to accomplish the task of building a very large, Tent City, for 7,500 Marines in the middle of the desert, in June, July, and August.

Two of the tasks that had to be accomplished seemed to be insurmountable problems. We needed electricity and we needed water. You can't have a facility to house and feed 7,500 Marines for two weeks in August, in the desert without those two commodities. I was at a complete loss of how to begin to solve these two problems.

I began to pray and after a few minutes there was a knock on my office door. I asked them to come in and a Marine Staff Sergeant walked in. He said, "Sir, I have orders transferring me from Camp Pendleton out here to 29 Palms and when I reported in at the Personnel Officer at Base Headquarters they didn't know why I was sent here because the Base had not asked for anyone with my Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). I asked him what his MOS was and he said he was an electrician. I showed him the drawing of the planned tent city with the areas designated for various units and said that the nearest point where we could tap into

electricity was about 1 ½ miles away. He asked if he could borrow the schematic of the camp. That he would take it back to his quarters and work on it. The next day he came back with an order for several thousand feet of communications wire, 33-telephone poles, 1,200 pigtales (used in tents to hook up lights) generators and various items of equipment for stringing wire, climbing telephone poles, etc. I was able to see that the materials were made available and he trained some of the Marines who were mess men (cooks) who had been sent out earlier and they were able to complete that huge assignment. They were able to remove 33 telephone poles from an expeditionary tent camp that the Marine Corps was remodeling and move those poles to the site of our camp, place them in the ground, string the wire and provide electricity to all the facilities.

One more incident, among many, that took a miracle of God to accomplish. You cannot, of course, put 7,500 Marines in the desert, in August, and not have sufficient water resources. Like the electricity problem, I had no idea as to how I was going to pipe in the huge amount of water that would be needed to supply that many Marines in August. The nearest water source which was just over a mile away.

The Base Commanding Officer, a Major General, was obviously concerned that the camp where the Reserve Marines would be staying would be ready and waiting upon their arrival. He asked me to give him a briefing every week regarding the progress of the camp which he jokingly referred to as "Dillville. So every week I would get a helicopter ride to fly over the growing camp and take pictures to use in the General's briefing. The General had asked me if we had all the utilities in place. I was able to tell him that the telephone poles were in and the lines were being hung to all the tents and support facilities. He asked about water, and I said that we were working on it. That meant, I was seriously praying about it.

I had contacted a General Contractor in 29 Palms and asked for a bid for the water project to bring water from the nearest water source to the Tent

teachers, “did you ever hear of the poor student teacher who lost all his grade books the last day of the semester, for three classes . . .?”

He gets assigned as a Battalion Supply officer, never learns the job, and gets congratulated on an outstanding job by the Battalion’s Commanding Officer, whose name, by the way was Lt.Colonel Pickle.” (I should have known that we would get along well).

He gets a job as Assistant Chief of Staff, MCB, 29 Palms, is not an engineering officer, really doesn’t know what he is doing, and gets an outstanding recommendation for promotion by the Commanding General for an outstanding performance of duty because everything went so well.

Again, it became even more obvious to me, and to all those back home at our church that I kept in contact with, that I knew would pray for me, that God is “able to do abundantly more than we can ever ask.” That God does go before us and prepares a way.

Chapter 10: New job, same faithful God

At the end of this four month time of active duty I went back to my regular job as Athletic Director at El Toro High School, in Orange County. The weekend before school started there was a California High School Athletic Director’s conference in San Diego. On the Sunday morning of the weekend conference the Fellowship of Christian Athletes provided a breakfast as a ministry to the Athletic Directors. I went to the breakfast with about forty other ADs. At the end of the breakfast time a person came in and spoke to the gentleman who happened to be sitting next to me, who, as it turned out, was the San Diego Representative for the FCA. After the messenger left the FCA representative turned to me and said that the speaker couldn’t make it, and asked me something that blew me away. He asked me if I ever spoke to Christian groups. I said yes, and he asked if I would speak to the athletic directors?

Though I came to the breakfast with no intention of speaking about the faithfulness of God to go before us straightening the way, I have never felt more prepared. I felt that God had provided the experiences that I had just completed with the Marine Corps at 29 Palms to encourage these Athletic Directors to trust God in their duties. There is some similarity to the AD's job and the assignment I had just finished while on active duty with the Marine Corps at 29 Palms. Even with appropriate planning, things don't always work the way we plan. Buses don't show to take or pickup athletic teams. The fields don't get lined, the referees and umpires don't show. Etc. The message was that God is faithful and if we will continually seek God through His word, through fellowship with other Christians, and prayer, there is no problem that God cannot help us with, "God is faithful, and will provide a way."

My last active duty assignment that came to me shortly after I was promoted to Colonel was an assignment at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, as Chief of Staff of the 2nd Field Service and Support Group. A unit of about 10,000 Marines that provide support for a Marine Division of about 40,000 Marines. The 2nd FSSG provides "beans, bullets, and bandages" for the Division. It is a very complex organization. I got a call from Headquarters Marine Corps and they said that they had considered several Reserve Colonels for the assignment and that I had been selected. I was very flattered that they had chosen me, and, like the assignment I had completed a year earlier at 29 Palms, I would have turned it down if I had really understood what it involved.

I had been selected to be the Chief of Staff of this unit my only superior officer being the Commanding General. After two weeks of planning (finding out what the initials FSSG stood for) we embarked on ships to make an amphibious landing on the coast of North Carolina.

After we boarded the ship, an LPD, I got a call on the phone in my room from the General asking me to contact the Division Heads, mostly colonels

and arrange for a meeting in an hour. I had been on this ship for a few minutes and knew nothing about the ship nor who the officers were that should be attending the meeting, nor how to get in touch with them, or where we would meet. It was one of those, **“What am I doing here?”** moments and I began to pray. In a couple minutes there was (as there had been in a similar situation at 29 Palms) a knock on my door. Much like the knock of the Staff Sergeant at 29 Palms, only this was a young Marine Captain. He said that he had worked as Staff Secretary for the General and **“was there anything he could do to help me.”**

They lock up officers who kiss other officers so I refrained myself and very professionally communicated the assignment that I had just received from the General. He said he would take care of it. In about 20-minutes he returned and said he had a meeting room that he would like to show me, to be sure that it met my requirements. Ha!! After seeing the room, a very nice conference room, he said he would contact the officers who should be at the meeting. A half hour later, when the General arrived all the staff officers were in this very fine conference room getting briefed by the General. Our assignment was to prepare a presentation of the FSSG’s mission, organization, and capabilities for a French Army General who would be visiting the ship.

The General left and I introduced myself to the Marine Staff Officers and asked that they prepare their briefings and that we would have a practice run in an hour. In an hour they came back and made a fine presentation. Because I knew very little about the organization, its mission, or capabilities, I was very sensitive to presentations which weren’t very clear. So, we had a few practices. As a Marine I knew very little about the organization, but, as a teacher I knew quite a bit about informative and non-informative presentations and we continued to practice. About five hours later we made the presentation to the French General, who was accompanied by a Marine Major General.

The Marine Major General who was escorting the French General had been a former Commanding General of FSSG before he received his second star. He told my boss, a one star general, that this had been the finest FSSG presentation he had ever heard. My boss, General Douglas, made the comment that it was put together by Colonel Dill, who has been with FSSG for just two weeks and who is actually a Reserve Officer on active duty as the Chief of Staff for a few weeks. The French General thought this was remarkable and wanted to talk to me. We talked for over an hour. The French Army does not have reserve officers assuming positions of responsibility with the regular force. He was curious about me, my background, my civilian job, and what other short term assignments I had been given where I worked with the Regular side of the Corps.

Trust me. I'm not making this up.

Chapter 11: Tripping Out With God

A couple years ago, while I was working with Biola University's School of Professional Studies I went to the main campus to have lunch with the faculty of the School of Business. At the luncheon I was introduced to a Professor who had ties with a Christian University in Japan, Kyoto University. When I was introduced to him as an Accounting professor he asked me if I would be interested in teaching at the Kyoto University for a semester. I went home, asked my wife if she would like to live in Japan for a while, and she said yes. So we went to Japan where I taught Accounting for a few weeks, through an interpreter. We were at the University for two months, giving us a chance to tour Japan on the weekends. After we came home we finished the rest of the semester over the internet.

In Japan, a large segment of the population speak English but they are so proud that they don't speak it very much because they don't want to be embarrassed. About a mile from where we lived there was a coffee shop at the train station. Almost every morning I walked to the coffee shop and had a roll and coffee. One day my wife asked me to bring her a cup of

coffee and a roll. Up until then I assumed that nobody in the coffee shop spoke English. I politely pointed to what I wanted and they fixed it. I tried to order my wife's coffee and roll by pointing to a stack of bags, pointing to a roll and coffee and with my fingers simulated my walking with the bag in hand. In perfect English the waiter asked if I "wanted the coffee and roll to go," and almost everyone in the coffee shop laughed because they all understood English and evidently thought it was funny the way I made the request.

After laughing with them, on the way home, I thought about the truth that things don't always appear to be what they are. How we get nervous or anxious when we don't feel that we are in charge, when what we need to be sure of is that God is in charge. Getting old is nothing to be feared if we are willing to trust God. The theme of this paper is to give examples of how God has worked in the lives of my wife and I and what a blessing it is to recognize this.

A few years ago I was invited to a Business Professor's Conference in Rottenberg, Germany. I was to make a presentation illustrating how I used a data projector in teaching Accounting. I knew this was going to be a special trip when my wife and I checked in with British Airways in San Diego and asked the lady validating our tickets and checking our bag how much more it would be for Business Class tickets. She looked over the counter at my feet. I had Nike running shoes on. She asked if I had any hard soled shoes with me. I said that, yes, in my bag. She said if you will put them on I will up grade you for no extra charge. So, I sat down at the ticket counter, took my bags off the scales and found a pair of hard soled shoes, put them on, and we flew Business Class for no extra charge.

The down side of this was that she said my carry on bag was too heavy, that I would have to check it in. I told her that I had a very expensive Data Projector and computer and I didn't feel I could risk damaging them. She assured me that they would be alright. Well, they didn't get hurt, they just

got lost. So, I go all the way to Germany to make a presentation about how I used a lap-top and data projector in teaching accounting while, as it turns out, my bag had been touring Germany and had ended up at an airport in Berlin. The day after I made my presentation using an overhead projector and transparencies that I quickly prepared, the missing computer and data projector showed up, no worse for the ride. The tags on the bags (sounds like a sad song) indicated that the bags had visited two German cities on their way to where I was. On the trip home I asked the same question of the ticket taker in London, how much to fly Business Class and she said \$4,000. You know we didn't fly business class on the flight home.

Chapter 12 . . . and it hasn't ended yet!!

I taught an adult Sunday school class at our church for years. It seemed that each week God would provide a situation that would demonstrate God's faithfulness in helping us through all situations. Whether it was my breaking a finger operating a Roto-Rooter machine to clear the plumbing, or my falling through the living room ceiling when I went up in the attic to replace a doorbell, or the experiences in the Marine Corps. God has provided me with a lot of experiences that could only have been solved by His faithfulness.

God directs in many ways. He directs us in many ways, mainly as we depend upon His word. The Psalmist said, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."* God is not a god of confusion and doubts or misinformation. He wants us to develop a trust (faith) in Him. The more we read God's word the more familiar we become with who He is and who we are in Christ. Some have said that familiarity breeds contempt but that is the world's view, not Gods. To get to know God, to begin to understand His will for our lives, we need to develop a tenacity, a hungering to know God better. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, **"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."** As my wife and I look back on our lives, we can honestly rejoice in the fact that

our lives have been very satisfying in where we have lived, where we have gone to church, the jobs that we have had, the friends at church that we have known for the last 40-years, and the family that we have enjoyed.

It seems that our background in coaching and the Marine Corps have proven to be very strong contributors to our Christian walk. In football the athlete is given a playbook and has to study it in order to become a contributing member of the team. Obviously in our Christian walk the Bible is our playbook and the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:9-11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought thee. Do not let me wander from thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee."

I mentioned earlier that I became a Christian and was baptized the night before I left for my first introduction to the Marine Corps, Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. I also mentioned earlier that I spent time almost every night for the six weeks I was there, in Quantico, reading the Bible in the Head at night after the lights were turned out in our quarters. I had to study to understand what had happened to me when I became a Christian.

When I first arrived at Quantico, Camp Upshur, in particular, the Marine Corps gave me the "Guidebook for Marines." The Drill Instructor referred to it as our "Bible." We had classes on it and were expected to study it, in order to become Marines. Before any mission is attempted in the Marine Corps the Marines must study the Operations Order. This is necessary so that they will understand what is expected of him and what their role is in accomplishing the mission. No mission would be attempted without supporting roles played by other Marines using artillery, air, intelligence gathering, etc. The Bible makes quite clear that we need other Christians and other Christians need us. No military operation would be successful without support from other units. The Bible is quite clear in identifying our role in supporting other Christians. Hebrews 10:24-25 describes our

supporting role as a Christian. “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Nor forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but, encouraging one another and all the more as we see the day drawing near.”

The Bible also states, in the book of Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please God, for we must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of those who **diligently seek him.**” and “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. “ Just as it would be difficult to contribute much to a victory in sports or a military mission without studying the playbook or operations order, so in our Christian walk it is difficult to accomplish God’s will in our lives if we don’t study His word.

I heard a story of a woman who gave instructions that when she died she wanted to be sure that someone put a fork in her hand while she was in the casket. The person responsible for doing this said that they would do that, but, why did she want it. Her answer was that she had attended about every potluck dinner that her church had had for years. And that at every potluck someone would come out of the kitchen and say, “Save your forks, the best is yet to come.” The woman said, “When people look at me in the casket, with the fork in my hand, I want them to remember that, “the best is yet to come.”

So, if things get rough and you aren’t sure what you are to do, just remember how faithful God has been in the past. **“Grab the fork and hold on, the best is yet to come!”**