

A Cup of
GOOD WATER

Reaches the K'ekchi' People of Guatemala

Francis Eachus



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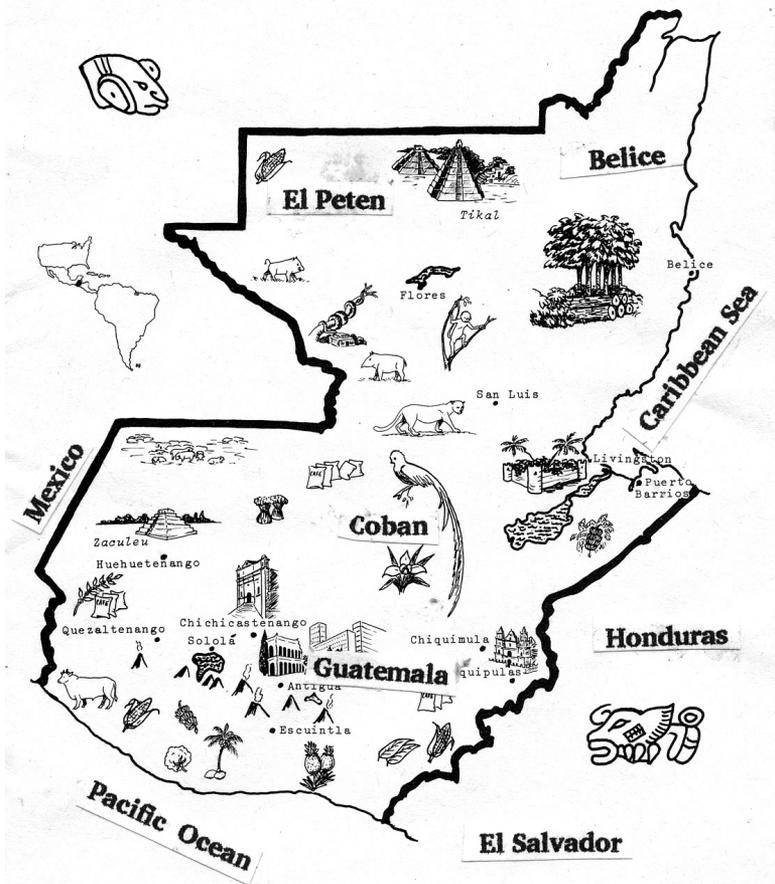
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Isaiah 55:11

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but it will achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Matthew 10:42

“If anyone gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Dedication



I dedicate this book to Ruth Carlson, my faithful friend and co-translator for more than fifty years. During this time our goal had not only been to provide the K'ekchi' people of Guatemala with a complete Bible in their heart's language, but also to write a *K'ekchi' Bible Concordance* for them.

Ruth's highest dream was fulfilled on July 10, 1999, when the Lord called her to receive her reward and to be with Him in heaven—just a few months short of the completion of the *K'ekchi' Bible Concordance*. To her, I lovingly dedicate this book.

Francis Eachus
February, 2005

Acknowledgements



*M*y sincere appreciation...

To my Heavenly Father, who has never failed me nor left me alone, whose mercy, patience, and help are beyond human understanding.

To my father and mother, to whom I am most grateful for their love and patience as they sacrificially reared me and set good examples for me to follow; to my sisters and brother, who put up with my many faults and loved me in spite of them; and to my brothers-in-law, who accepted me as a sister and, each at various times, encouraged the writing of this book.

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denominations whose names are too numerous to mention, especially those of the Southern Baptist Mission, the Eastern Mennonite Mission, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Missionary Aviation Fellowship. All have faithfully ministered to the K'ekchi' people—with the common goal of reaching them for the Lord Jesus Christ and helping them to mature in their Christian faith.

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To Linda Witmer for her faithful friendship to Ruth and me as we co-labored with the K'ekchi' people; for her unfailing comfort and encouragement after Ruth's death; for her dedication to helping the K'ekchi' with her medical training and the development of talents of the K'ekchi' people; and for the many hours she has spent helping me revise this book.

To Dr. Linda Jones for her friendship and patient encouragement and exhortations to continue on with life and bring to completion the *K'ekchi' Bible Concordance* and revision of the *K'ekchi' Bible* after my best friend and co-worker went to be with the Lord and life seemed meaningless; for her encouragement at numerous times when I felt that writing this book was too great a task; for the medical help that she has given me making it

Acknowledgements

possible for me to remain here in Coban; and for her desire to use her medical skills to relieve the suffering of the K'ekchi' people.

To my line-editor, Sue Spillane-Bramlette, for the long hours spent in reviewing my manuscript and for the helpful suggestions she gave me for improving the work. And many thanks to Barbara Everett for the front cover picture.

Last but not least, to my K'ekchi' brothers, sisters, and friends, who have graciously and sincerely accepted us into their lives and homes and have unselfishly allowed us to share their culture and beautiful language. They are a very special people whom we have come to love and appreciate. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have lived among them and learned from them. They have taught me many things, given me an appreciation for life, and demonstrated to me what it truly means to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Preface



This book is the result of many requests and suggestions from others during the past several years. It is my own memoir, and it should be understood that the memories and opinions expressed here in no way reflect the opinions of my siblings or friends. My desire is that it will prove a blessing and an encouragement to those who read it.

For fifty years Ruth Carlson and I were privileged to work with the K'ekchi' indigenous people, who are descendants of the Mayan Indians. The K'ekchi' number approximately 800,000 native speakers that live primarily in the Department of Alta Verapaz in Northern Guatemala. Their territory extends up into El Peten, Izabal and Belice.

During our years of working in their midst, Ruth and I saw God work in many wonderful ways, performing

miracles that were unexplainable and changing the lives of thousands of people as His Word became available to them in their own language.

How did it happen that two unrelated individuals, in many ways very different, could experience together the Lord's great work? I have asked myself this question many times. Was it not because of the common goals and aspirations that we shared? Were these shared goals only made possible because of a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Was it only happenstance that *these* two people even met? Or did God actually have some purpose for which He had chosen them and destined their two lives to achieve together? To answer these questions, one must look back many years. I invite you to join me as we do just that...to the glory of Christ, our Savior!

Introduction



The engine of the DC6 droned on and on. I sat gazing out the window as the airplane lifted off from the crowded, congested city of Guatemala. Below us the Cuchumatán Mountains extended northward toward Mexico. The Montaña River snaked its way through the valleys between them. An arid, dry area stared up at me—a bronze desert lacking vegetation and shrubs, and I wondered, *Is this where I have been called to serve? Has God really called me to leave a good teaching career and come here against my family's wishes?*

But as we glided farther on through the sky, on the northeast side of the mountain, green vegetation, tall pines, and the beautiful, colored leaves of the Sugar Gum tree rose up to greet me. Twenty minutes after leaving the Aurora Airport in Guatemala City I found myself glancing below as the Cahabon River wound its

way through green vegetation in every direction visible. And I thanked God that my next however-many years would be spent in the rainforests of Northern Guatemala, the “land of eternal springtime,” known for the beautiful orchids that grow deep within its rainforests.

Suddenly the plane lost altitude. Men were playing soccer on a small, level area of pasture grass. Cows were grazing amongst them. The plane circled; the game came to a halt, and men hurriedly chased the cows from an impromptu “landing strip.” Our small plane swooped down over the mountain and touched down on a bumpy grass slope. I wondered how the aircraft could stop before we went over the bank and into the river below. But the plane came to a stop, the doors opened, and passengers crowded into the aisle, all wanting to be first out. Now the soccer players turned into taxi drivers as we exited the plane and mounted waiting vehicles.

I looked around the area, which was surrounded by mountains. So this was Coban, the small town that would be my home (for the next fifty years or more). We entered a battered taxi and rattled our way around curves and over rocks and mud holes as we made our way into the small town, which was known for its cobblestone streets. As we drove along, I thought back to my early years. I grew up in the town of Brighton, Colorado, and completed twelve years of school there. Then I left home for the first time to enter college and graduated four years later with a Bachelor of Arts de-

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gree from Colorado State College of Education (CSCE), later known as the University of Northern Colorado. My dream was to become a good teacher, like the teachers who had influenced my early life so much. Little did I realize that at CSCE I would find what I had *really* been searching for during the first twenty years of my life: meaning. That search ended when I surrendered my life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking back now, it was as if my spirit's thirst had been satisfied with a "cup of good water". I drank deeply as we studied the Bible in our Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) meetings on campus.

It was during college that I met Ruth Carlson, a friend who was destined to become my co-worker for the next fifty years. Ruth had grown up in a small town called Loomis, Nebraska.

Desiring to be a teacher, also, she'd enrolled in the Colorado State College of Education.

Ruth soon became my best friend and was very influential in my spiritual growth. To our great surprise, we met again at Trinity Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, where I was working half days at Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, with aspirations of becoming a full-time staff member. At that time Ruth had already been accepted by the Evangelical Free Church mission board to serve abroad as a teacher for missionary children in Zaire. But God had other plans for *both* of us...as will be revealed in the coming pages. These were the thoughts that filled my mind as we drove from the airport to Coban.

We drove through Coban and on to the next smaller town of San Juan Chamelco, where we were to have our first meal with veteran Church of the Nazarene missionaries, William and Elizabeth Sedat. Entering the house we were greeted by the smell of black beans cooking on the stove, hot tortillas on the grill, and the famous Cak Ic, a turkey soup traditional to the K'ekchi' area. I wondered again why God had chosen me to come here. I thought back over the years that had led me to this moment and wondered how God had seen fit to bring me to this strange yet pivotal point in my life's journey.

CHAPTER 1

The Early Years of Francis Eachus



*L*ife began for me a long time ago—on April 14, 1927, when my mother gave birth to her fifth and last child, whom she named Francis Mae. What was in her mind and heart as she looked down at my face? Was it filled with awe and wonder at God’s miracle of life? Did she pray for me? Was she a bit fearful for what might lie ahead in the future as she reared me? I will never know now, but precious and many are the memories of my mother and father as I grew up. Of course, I actually remember very little of the early, early years...only what has been told to me or said aloud in my presence. But what memories and knowledge I do have are of greater value to me than silver or gold!

My mother, Ida Lillian Deal, was born in Bird City, Kansas. My father, Fred Irvin Eachus, was born in Joplin, Missouri. Both were very young when their

parents moved to Eastern Colorado to homestead and try to eke out a living for their families. Dad and his family went by covered wagon and Dad walked beside the wagon a good part of the way.

My father sometimes talked of the fields of tall sunflowers along the trail West and how tired and hot he got trudging through those fields. Even in his later years he puzzled over the fact that I had taken a picture of a field of sunflowers because I thought it was pretty! Both families settled near Bennett, Colorado. Both began attending the small community church in the town of Bennett, which happened to be Methodist. Mom and Dad became good friends and started dating on horseback, singing hymns as they rode together to attend the youth meetings at the community church, always taking with them a hoe or shovel with which to kill the rattle snakes!

One of their favorite hymns was “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus.” Many years later, as we kids traveled with them in their old Model T Ford, Mom and Dad would sing it together as a duet. How I loved to hear them sing!

Shortly after they were married my mother and dad had a “runaway” with their horse and buggy and they were both thrown off the rig. The buggy ran over my father, leaving him with a broken leg and one injured kidney, which later had to be removed. The one-room, sod house in which they lived had one window with a wooden shutter. There was neither glass nor screening

on the window, so when it was shut they were in total darkness.

I cannot remember them talking about a lamp of any kind, so I assume they used candles. While Dad lay in bed in that hot room, his leg in a cast, mom would try to scare the flies away and would read aloud to him. Their favorite book was *Ben Hur*. I never remember hearing my parents complain about those days. On the contrary, it seemed to be a challenge to them to overcome their many trials. *Worry?* Yes, I know they worried about how they would exist sometimes, but they never complained about it to us kids.

After a few years of homesteading the folks decided to move West and see if they could better themselves financially. My oldest sister, Helen Elizabeth, was a baby when they moved to Brighton, Colorado, a small town twenty-two miles north of Denver. Dad found work at the Counter Lumber Company, where he was employed for over thirty years until he retired. After awhile they were finally able to buy a small house on the north side of town. And it was in that same house that the next four of us were born and reared.

When they moved to Brighton, my parents naturally began attending the local Methodist Church. During one Sunday service my mother took my sister Helen, who was then a baby, outside because she was crying. Later one of the women suggested to my father that he might consider coming alone and leaving my mother and sister at home. Dad replied that if *that* was how they felt none of them would be back. And so they stopped going to

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church for a number of years. Later a pastor from the Baptist Church began working part-time at the lumber company with my father. They became good friends and he invited Dad to attend church and bring his family. So Dad and Mom began attending the First Baptist Church of Brighton. Dad later stopped going, but Mom always continued to send us kids to Sunday School and worship services, as well as to the youth meetings.

My brother was born two years after Helen and he was named Fred Irvin, after my father. Margaret Susan came along two years later, followed by a sister whom they named Marion Belle. And then I came into the world on April 14, 1927 and they named me Francis Mae.



Our family picture taken on May 10, 1963 on Mom and Dad's 36th Wedding Anniversary. Front row: Dad, Mom and Marion; Second row: Margaret, Francis and Helen; Back row: Fred

My first two years were like any other normal baby's, of which I have no memories myself. But I have often heard my mother and father talk of the early years of their five kids. In my second year, apparently, I developed laryngitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia—and was dying. My dad borrowed a car from his boss and rushed me twenty miles away to the Children's Hospital in Denver. Mom and Dad took me to the Emergency Room entrance and I was immediately taken to surgery.

My mother sat by my bedside for the next month and was taught how to clean the silver tube in my trachea and how to care for me. Many years later Mother told me how one day the doctors came in, looked at me, and said to her, "We can do nothing more. If this baby lives it will be because God has something very special for her to do." My parents never forgot those words and no doubt wondered what they meant.

Both of my parents had only a sixth grade education but, because of their experiences and desire to learn all they could, they had a wealth of education and were able to converse with anyone they met. The folks were interested in many things, but what stands out most in my mind was their love and appreciation for nature and for God's creation. Their appreciation of this was passed on to us kids. Today my most favorite recreation is still walking outside, preferably in the Rocky Mountains, just viewing the wonders and beauties of nature, and listening to the sound of a stream as it passes over the rocks, or the roar of Boulder Falls while feeling the spray that covers you as you stand watching.

We were never a financially wealthy family, but my parents were both hard workers and good managers of what little they had. They were wealthy in many other ways. They were a couple with high moral standards and they did their best to teach us five kids the difference between right and wrong. We were taught to respect each other, as well as our personal possessions.

I grew up like any other normal child—playing outdoors with friends and family members. Helen, being the oldest, was in the house with my mother most of the time. My brother Fred spent time with his friends or working at neighborhood jobs. Margaret, Marion, and I were not only the closest in age, but we also had close relationships with each other when we were young. We enjoyed playing together in our large back yard. We had three red hens and we would take them out of the chicken yard and play with them on the north side of the house in the afternoon shade.

We had a beautiful shade tree to climb, lots of flowers, an apple tree, grapevines, and currant bushes. There was also a beautiful weeping willow tree, a maple tree, and one a sugar maple tree that had the most beautiful leaves in the fall. We also had a black walnut tree that bore fruit, and as kids we had the privilege of shelling the nuts. My favorite tree was the willow. I would climb up as high as I dared and sing at the top of my lungs. The woman who lived next door usually brought me a piece of cake and a glass of milk when she would hear me singing. But one day she failed to appear and I went into the house, weeping to my mother, and

said, “I ‘sanged’ and ‘sanged’ and she never brought my cake.”

I was more of a “tomboy” than my sisters. While they were interested in cooking, sewing, and doing things young girls *should* want to do, I was more interested in climbing trees and playing “cops and robbers” in our back yard. I saved cereal box tops to send away for “free” things. How excited I was when my first detective set arrived in the mail—it consisting of false eyes, ears, nose, mustache, and a fingerprint kit. I immediately began to gather the fingerprints of my siblings, mom, and dad. As I got older my interests began to change. I wanted to do more of the things my sisters were doing, but it seemed to me that I was always “too young” in their eyes. I had a favorite pet: a black Cocker Spaniel named “Curly,” and we were inseparable.

Dad brought us an old tire from the lumber truck he used to drive, and we took turns curling up inside the tire while the others rolled the tire around the yard. Almost always one of us would crash into one of the trees before we stopped playing. Mom also had a beautiful Bleeding Heart plant that she treasured. We had to be careful not to run over it while we were playing. Each winter she would cover it up to keep it from freezing. In the front corner of the yard, behind the big lavender lilac bush, there was an evergreen tree. There I found my special, secret spot, where I could be alone and not be disturbed by the others. I would crawl in under the evergreen and sit there to meditate and pet my beloved dog.

We lived about thirty miles from the Rocky Mountains. After Dad was able to buy a car, on Sundays he would drive us as a family to some place in the mountains, where we would spend the day. Mom fixed great meals on the campfire while Dad and I went on hikes. It was on these hikes that I grew to appreciate the mountains, the outdoors, God's creation of nature, and the wonders of wildlife. My father was a wonderful teacher. We always looked forward to our trips to Peaceful Valley or Rainbow Falls, driving up Left Hand Canyon or the Big Thompson Canyon and to Estes Park. When I was quite young Dad took us for a trip up Pike's Peak. I can remember that when we were partly to the top, the car's engine vapor locked. I feared we were stranded there for good!

Dad got out and looked at the engine for a few minutes. Then he came back to the car and asked Mother for her hat pin. He used it to make a hole in the carburetor bigger, then came back and started the car. My mother pinned her hat on again, and off we drove to the top of the mountain. That day I felt my father could do anything! What pleasant memories I have of our trips to the numerous mountain areas in Colorado and of us standing there, looking at Rainbow Falls as it tumbled down the rocks, feeling the drops of water as they splashed on my face and arms and seeing the rainbow above it—and, of course, driving along, marveling at the bright array of colorful leaves on the Aspen trees each fall.

One of my favorite memories is coming home from school on Mom's washdays. She had no machine, but washed all of our clothes on the old washboard and hung them on the clotheslines in the backyard to dry. I would race home from school at noon because Mom would have my favorite meal ready: a kettle of pinto beans with chunks of pork in them; fresh, homemade rolls; and home-canned peaches for dessert. In the afternoon when I came home from school, Mom would be standing under the clothesline taking the clothes down. In the winter the clothes often froze on the line! How her arthritic hands must have ached on those winter days from all the work and the cold, but she never complained. Mom also made dill pickles each year and kept them in a big crock in the basement. After school I would enjoy a dill pickle sandwich.

In our kitchen there was a long blackboard on one wall and we kids would practice our arithmetic and spelling. After supper Dad would take a piece of chalk and draw a big circle on the kitchen floor. He and I would play marbles there. Sometimes we played for keeps and I built up a supply of marbles that I treasured for years. I kept them in a big, ten-pound sugar sack that Mom gave me. Last time I remember counting them, I had over 1,100 marbles!

I wrote for free, used postage stamps and began my stamp collection. Once I thought I was getting a free set of rare stamps, only to receive an invoice for them. When the third invoice arrived, I decided I had to show it to my parents, since each one was getting a

little stronger in their pleas for me to pay my debt. My dad immediately made me take the stamps out of my album and send them back to the company. He wrote a scathing letter to the stamp company, advising them to stop taking advantage of innocent children. That was the last we ever heard from the Ingersoll Stamp Collector's Company. And it was also the end of my interest in stamp collecting.

Our childhood days were happy ones for all of us. We were not allowed to go many places after school to play with the other kids, but we could always have our friends come to our house to play. Helen, the oldest, was in the local 4 H Club and learned to cook exotic things—my favorite of which was chocolate fudge and white taffy. How we enjoyed pulling taffy and we would invite some of our choice friends over for a taffy pull. Helen was in high school and had a boyfriend, Merrill, who later became my brother-in-law. Those two always had to go outside to beat the fudge under the willow tree and they never seemed to want anyone to accompany them!

Merrill went with us on all our family outings in the mountains, often carrying me on his shoulders since I was still quite young and couldn't keep up on the family hikes. He wore a small, silver football, hanging from his letter "B" that he had earned in football. I loved that football and just knew he would give it to me one day. How I wept when he gave it to Helen instead of me. It took me years to understand why he chose to give it to Helen.

One day Dad brought home a baseball cap with the words “Counter Lumber Company” written on it. He gave that cap to me and I only took it off to go to school. My brother, Fred, was on the high school baseball team and was practicing his pitching one day. He convinced me to hold a bushel basket in front of my face while he pitched the ball into the basket. All was going well until I lowered the basket to ask him to wait a minute, but he had already released the ball. It hit me in the forehead and that was the first time I literally “saw stars.” Since I worshipped my brother, his apology was accepted and we continued his practicing. Another day Margaret and Marion were holding two swings back and Helen was pulling me in our wagon. Just as Helen started pulling me through the swings, one of them released her chains. The swing caught me around the neck and pulled me from the wagon. I can yet remember them all standing there looking down at me, asking if I was all right. It was worth getting hurt to get all that attention!

We learned that if we wanted something badly enough we had to work for it because Dad simply did not have any money to spend on luxuries. I began baking apple pies and Dad paid me ten cents a pie. I had seen a wagon in the store, a beautiful blue wagon with white letters on each side that said, “Blue Racer.” Since I was too young to work in a local store and my parents couldn’t eat that many apple pies, I had to think of something else. I am sure I must have pestered my Mom and Dad for odd jobs around the house.

One evening Dad came home from work and said that one of his bosses wanted someone to water and cut her grass that summer. She would pay them \$3.50 a month! I figured that with what I could save in three months I could own that wagon. So, I accepted the job. When Dad realized I was serious about that wagon, he advanced me the money and we picked up the wagon a few days later. How proud I was of my earning power, and I used that wagon for everything. I hauled ice from the local ice plant for Mom to use in our icebox. I went to get groceries for Mom in that wagon. Finally, I figured out a way that I wouldn't have to pull it myself. Helen had married by then and lived across the street from us. She had a Springer Spaniel and we had a Cocker Spaniel. I rigged up a harness for the two dogs and they would pull me to the store, and then when we got the groceries I would walk back, but not carry any groceries since they hauled them in the wagon. They did not even require a bribe or treat to do it! It was enough for them if I praised them and patted them on their heads. They were a great team and I loved them dearly, except for the one time they got tired of waiting for me and went home without me. I walked home without the groceries, and made them pull me back to the store to get them. What a sad day it was when each, in his own time, got old and feeble and had to be put to sleep. My dad was not one to watch his animals suffer. He felt that each deserved to have an easy death when the time came. Of course, each one was put in a box and buried in his favorite spot in the back yard. Margaret, Marion, and I planned the funerals.

Fred in his high school years was interested in getting some money for clothes. He and his friend, Robert, got up at 4 A.M. each morning and set traps in the Platte River to catch muskrats. And of course when they caught some the muskrats had to be skinned and the hides stretched to dry. He could then sell the hides for \$1.25 each. He paid me twenty-five cents a hide to help him skin them. None of my other sisters were interested in doing this sort of thing, but I felt quite proud one morning when he handed me his pocket knife and said, "You do it." I can yet remember the details of skinning a muskrat.

I had to cut around each leg and the tail where the fur ended. Then I made a cut from the tail to the legs. Then we began pulling the skin back over the animal, being very careful as we cut it loose from the flesh because the price dropped considerably if the skin had a cut in it. We had to stretch it on a board that Fred had shaped out of old shingles from the house. We salted the skins and let them dry. I felt very important getting the opportunity to help my big brother. It was in those days that my brother began calling me "Bud" or "Buddy," and this continued for years.

I was probably the most mischievous member of our family and often found myself in trouble. One of my early memories is going on errands for my Mom. When I went to the home grocery, about a block from our house, I would see the older men sitting out in front of the store, smoking and visiting. They often "rolled their own," and I was fascinated with the little bag of

Golden Grain tobacco they all had. It had a beautiful picture of golden wheat standing in a bundle and it sold for only five cents.

One day I went to the store with a nickel in my hand and asked to buy a bag of Golden Grain tobacco. When they asked me for whom I was buying it, I said, "Oh, my brother, of course." But, alas, when I got home I had the problem of knowing what to do with it. So I went to the chicken yard in our backyard. Outside the chicken fence there was a stack of used lumber that Dad had gotten from tearing down an old barn for someone. I hid the little bag of tobacco under one of the boards. Sometimes after school I would go to the chicken house and practice "rolling my own." But, one afternoon my brother was sent out to chop up some firewood from those old boards and he discovered my tobacco! He took it in to my mother. It didn't take them long to figure out who was the culprit. And they somehow never believed that it had never entered my mouth. I simply rolled my cigarette, lit it in my fingers, watched the smoke till it went out, and then I threw it down the outhouse. My Mom gave me the paddling I deserved, with instructions never to do *that* again!

One of the clerks in the store, named Jim Fish, liked to wait on me. Sometimes I was given a penny to spend on myself. There was a dish of wrapped caramels by the register. One had a blue center and the lucky person who picked the one with the blue center received a prize. There was a small wooden boat about twelve inches long that would travel in a tub of water powered

by a AA flashlight battery. How I longed for that boat and would pick a caramel and go away disappointed because I did not find the blue center. One afternoon as I stood trying to decide which caramel to pick up, Jim casually pushed a certain one into my hand. When I unwrapped it, to my amazement it had the blue center! I spent lots of time playing with that boat in my mother's wash tub.

Another time when I went to the store I saw a basketful of beautiful apricots and oh, how I wanted one. When the man in charge left the storeroom and went to the back to talk to his aunt, who owned the store, I reached up, took one, and put it in my pocket. Jim did not know that I had taken it. On the way home, I ate half of it. Thinking how delicious it was, I decided to save the other half and share it with my mother, expecting that she would thank me for it. She counted the change to see if I had spent her money for it. But the change was all there, so she immediately asked where I had gotten the apricot. Knowing it was wrong to tell lies, I told the truth. Mother handed me back the half of the apricot, turned me around, and told me to go immediately to the store and return it to Jim. I was not to accept it, or anything else they might offer me. That was the hardest block I have ever walked when I went to confess my sin and return that half an apricot. But it cured me of any desire to ever steal again...at least until my Junior year in college.

My next project was to save money for a bicycle, after which I was really "free." How good it felt to ride

that bike and feel the wind in my face, whipping my hair around. However, I was forbidden to ride out of town and I could not ride in traffic. The Post Office was located at the west edge of town near the Platte River. And just across the Platte River to the west of town there was a big hill called Pittman's Hill. As I stood in front of the post office and looked across the river at that hill, the temptation at last became too big for me to handle. I rode across the river, pushed the bike up the hill, got on it, and had the "ride of my life" back down the hill. Actually, my Mom had good reason to forbid this. It was a gravel road with lots of traffic coming from Boulder, the next town to the west. But the Lord protected me that afternoon. For years I kept that secret locked in my heart, remembering it only as we drove up or down that hill in the car. Just recently I confessed it to my sisters, Marion and Margaret, as we drove up the hill to go to Longmont for supper. Their response: "Francis, you didn't really do that, did you?"

My teachers had a big influence in my life and I respected them very much. However, there was one teacher whom I disliked. She and her sister and brother were our next door neighbors and were very good friends with my mother. Her name was Dorcas Ramey. She seemed to feel it was her "duty" to keep an eye on me when I was in junior high school. Any little thing I did wrong she was the first to tell my mom, even though she was not my teacher. She taught sixth "B" and I was in sixth "A." I guess the teachers must have compared notes about their students.

My teachers always urged me to do my best, all the while assuring me that it made no difference on which side of town I lived. One teacher told me I could do anything I wanted if I really worked toward that goal. My goal was to attend college and become a teacher like my first grade school teacher, my sixth grade teacher, and my orchestra director in high school. I admired them greatly, except for our next door neighbor.

By the time I reached sixth grade I already had a longing to do something different or special. I was not content to think of spending the rest of my life as I had been doing. I was searching for something that I lacked. After school I would remain in the classroom and wash blackboards or do anything that Miss Schaefer would let me do. Sometimes I would ask her what I could do in order to amount to something good. I felt strongly about the fact that we were a poor family and that we lived on the north side of town. Kids who had been my friends in grade school now were turning away from me, gravitating for friendships to the more wealthy kids who lived on the south side of town. Peer pressure was hurting deeply and I could not cope with it. I tried to influence people by doing the very best I could and thus to excel.

In the sixth grade I was elected *schoolyard officer* and organized my committee of helpers. Boy, did we keep that schoolyard clean! Ralph, Sam, and Dale were my best friends then, as well as Shirley and Gertrude. In eighth grade I was elected school president. Each year the American Legion chose one boy and one girl they

thought were outstanding students in the eighth grade graduating class. These two were awarded a \$25 scholarship, to be saved towards college, and their names were engraved on a plaque that hung in the main hall of our junior high school. I was chosen as “Outstanding Girl” that year and enjoyed seeing my name on the bronze plaque next to Sam’s (who was chosen “Outstanding Boy.”) The plaque hung in the school hall until the school was demolished. Winning that award probably did more to help cure my inferiority complex than anything else that had happened to me thus far in life.

Miss Schaefer took a special interest in me and encouraged me to *dream on* and to make something of myself when I finished high school, telling me that I could go on to college if I really wanted to. She always had some word of encouragement for me. But I caused my mother many, many worries by my tardiness in returning from school. Miss Schaefer was a good friend and encourager to me. For years we kept in contact. After I became vitally interested in spiritual things and found the Lord as a personal Friend, I realized I had found what I had been searching for all those years. In my enthusiasm, I went to see Miss Schaefer and told her of my newfound faith in Christ and even gave her a Bible, but it had the opposite effect on her.

“What do you think I am,” she said. “A heathen?” She said she wasn’t interested in reading something with “thee” and “thou” all over in it. I told her this one was translated into a more contemporary English called, *The Living Bible*. But she never gave me the assurance that

she would read the Bible. She attended one of the more liberal churches in town where all the elite went—the Presbyterian church. But for some strange reason, years later, every time I spoke in my home church and it was announced in the local paper, I was surprised that Miss Schaefer and one of her fellow teachers were there to hear me. One of the last times I ever spoke with her, she said, “Francis, you are not the same person you used to be.”

“Miss Schaefer, the difference is the Lord Jesus Christ,” I answered. She never answered me concerning that point but changed the subject and went on to speak of good works and achievements. Not too long ago her friend visited my home church, First Baptist Church of Brighton, because I was speaking that morning.

“You are the one that gave Louise Schaefer a Bible, aren’t you?” she remarked to me. I said yes and asked if she ever read it, but again I got no answer.

Miss Schaefer never seemed to forget me. When I was in college she would still take me to the Field Museum in Denver to hear the travel talks on Sunday afternoon. I was fascinated by the theme song, which was, “Take a kettle trip to far away _____,” and it would add the name of the country about which the travel talk was to be that afternoon. I could imagine myself going to each country. No doubt that contributed much to my interest in other cultures. One time Miss Schaefer gave me ten dollars to spend on whatever I wanted. The next time we went to the Field Museum she asked what I had used the money for. I said a new

pair of shoes and I think she was a bit disappointed that it was something so mundane.

It was also in the sixth grade that I found my first love. Ralph's dad owned the Conoco gas station in town. And I thought Ralph was the neatest boy in town. We were friends through junior high and the first three years in high school. Toward the end of that year the junior/senior prom was held and Ralph asked me to go with him. Mom made over the formal all the other sisters had worn so that it fit me and Ralph came carrying my first corsage. How proud I was as I walked out the door with him. But, alas, my parents told him he had to have me home by 10:30 P.M., so at 10:30 Ralph dutifully walked me home. Then he returned to the prom and began dancing with one of my closest girlfriends! That was the end of my first love.

But I always wondered what happened to Ralph, because he very shortly broke up with Rachel and his family moved to Denver. Several years later, after serving with a missionary/nurse in Chiapas, Mexico, I came home and spoke in my home church. While standing at the podium I noticed Ralph's mother sitting in the congregation. After the service, she came to speak to me. She told me Ralph was married and had two young children. I was then able to forget about Ralph.

In spite of the encouragement of my teachers and my youthful achievements and happiness, there was still something lacking in my life. I wondered at times if I would ever find the satisfaction that I was searching for. When I was twelve, I went forward one Sunday

morning and made a profession of faith in Christ and was baptized a few months later—on the same day as my mother. I had good, faithful Sunday School teachers, and we were blessed in having good, sound pastors who preached the Word. I respected them very much and loved to stop in at the church after school on my way to work. I would sit for a few minutes in the choir loft with Mrs. Losh, the pastor’s wife. She would be cleaning the church then, and we would visit a few minutes and sometimes she’d talk to me about college. Then we would sing a chorus or a hymn, a couple of my favorites being, “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” and “Got Any Rivers You Think Are Uncrossable?” She would pray and I would hurry on to work.

The teaching I received at the First Baptist Church of Brighton had a great influence on my life. It was this influence that kept me on the right track in later years when I got to the university and met up with people who had different expectations than those with which I had been reared and was confronted with other beliefs and ideologies. The Bible verse that says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it,” has many times over been proven true to me (Proverbs 22:6). Even though I had found my Lord and Savior, I was still searching for something, and it was not until years later that I realized what it meant to yield myself *completely* to Him.

Life went on much the same for me until I turned sixteen and was old enough to work in one of the local stores. I was soon hired to work after school and

all day Saturday at the Ben Franklin Variety Store and put in charge of three counters: the candy counter, the stationery counter, and the toy counter. And I was happy! Had I been given the choice, those were the ones I would have chosen! I took pride in keeping the candy counter clean and was one of the most popular clerks because of this. When the bosses would leave for their coffee breaks, each of the other clerks came to sample the candy and would visit a few minutes.

Under the counters were shelves with supplies on them. We would sometimes sit down under the counters to rest a few minutes out of sight of anyone. That was a pretty good way to rest our feet until, one afternoon, one of the clerks was found asleep there. How thankful I was that I was never caught resting. Each evening, the boss would go around closing the cash registers and would take the money from them upstairs to the office. After she had looked at the coins and kept what she wanted for her collection, she would sometimes call me to the office and I was allowed to exchange my coins for some older ones that I didn't have in *my* collection. She helped me build up quite a collection of old coins; but sadly my treasured coin collection was somehow lost when I went away to college.

My boss had a desire to help me, and even when I was in college she continued to let me work when I was home on Saturdays and during the summer. None of the local people who encouraged me were really "born again" Christians, as far as I know, except for my pastor's wife. Yet they were able to challenge and

encourage me in ways that I needed as a teenager. I had been baptized and had professed to accept Christ as my Savior. I believed I was a Christian, yet I never could explain the “hunger” that still existed in my life. I was seeking for something, or Someone, but could not yet find that One.

My sisters, Margaret and Marion, wanted to take piano lessons, but dad was more interested in the violin since he enjoyed fiddling on a violin that someone had given to him. So, I began violin lessons in the sixth grade. My teacher, Mr. Shay, came out from Denver and taught young students in a side room at the local mortuary. I would enter the mortuary with fear—and trembling from the tales we had heard in school about the place. By the time my lesson was ending it would be nearly dusk. I would hurry down the stairs and run outside, then sometimes all the way home!

In high school I played in the school orchestra and was proud to be *first chair*. Miss Dorothy Ambrose was the music teacher and she sponsored the school orchestra. She had the most beautiful red hair a person could imagine. She played a violin in the Denver Symphony Orchestra and several times she took me to one of the concerts she was playing in. She would lead me up to one of the balconies, hand me her opera glasses, and give me strict instructions not to leave that seat until she returned to get me. I can yet remember the thrill I had that first night as I watched and listened. Then my goal changed and I went home determined I was someday going to be a famous concert violinist! This

experience probably contributed to my appreciation of classical and of sacred music.

After my friendship with Ralph ended I became interested in another fellow, who played a trombone. We became good friends during orchestra practices. We had much in common and I think my family would have been pleased had that relationship continued. In 1945 I graduated from high school and many friendships ended as we each went our own way. I was still searching for something special and was interested in going on to college. A scholarship made that possible. I enrolled at Colorado State College of Education, located in Greeley, a city about thirty miles north of Brighton. I chose CSCE because it was so highly rated in teacher-training and was also fairly close to my home. Inscribed above the door of Kemper High School, where some of us did our student teaching, were the words, "Whoso teaches a child labors with God in His workshop." Those words were a challenge to me, and I think I believed that in teaching I would at last find what I had been looking for.

1945 was also a year that initiated changes for our family and friends. Robert Castor was a close friend of my brother's. It was during those days that the Japanese bombed Pear Harbor. My brother immediately went to the draft board and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. But Robert enlisted in the Air Corps. And so the two parted one morning, each going their separate way. It was a sad day indeed when my brother came home on leave and my mom had to tell him that Robert would not be

returning because his plane had been shot down and all passengers aboard were killed.

The war hit people hard as they watched their sons go off to the service. I remember seeing my mother standing at the window, waving to my brother as he left and crying hard. I naively went up to her and said, "Mom, don't cry. I am still here." Her answer was, "Francis, you can never take Fred's place." I was crushed at my failure to comfort her. I was left with a feeling of rejection and climbed up high in the willow tree to weep. Mom never knew how much it had hurt me, but that painful feeling never left me for many years. Fred, being the only son, was greatly loved by my parents and also by his sisters. Yet somehow I always felt that Fred was a bit spoiled, although I worshipped him myself when I was growing up.

Looking back I realize that the war had a negative influence in my life. It was during my high school days that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and Fred went off to war. Up until that time I had always liked my classmates from other cultures and ethnic groups and among them were some of my closest friends. But I began to blame the Japanese for my brother leaving. I turned against one of my best friends, a Japanese girl who had been a classmate of mine for several years. I often went with my father to their farm, where we bought fresh, homegrown vegetables. We took our salt shakers and ate all the fresh tomatoes we wanted there in the field as we picked them to buy and take home. I am sure she wondered why I didn't care to associate with her anymore in my Senior year of High School.

There were some Japanese truck farmers who had ham radios in their fields and were sending messages to Japan. One of our neighbors was a former Methodist missionary in Japan. Her husband was from Japan. Some felt that they were involved in this activity. Our Baptist church members voted to permit the Japanese Christians to meet in the church basement on Sunday evenings while we were having our Baptist Youth Fellowship meetings upstairs. Since we always had refreshments after the meeting, some of us had to go to the kitchen in the basement, passing through the room where the Japanese were worshipping. I can remember when it was my turn, I “banged” the lids of the kettles around to disturb their meeting. After I completely surrendered my life to the Lord, I deeply regretted having acted this way when they were really my brothers and sisters in the Lord. I renewed contact with my former high school “chum,” and we were again good friends. In fact, she helped support me in my missionary work for many years.

When the war ended my brother returned home and continued living with my mom and dad, working as a night foreman for the Gardner Denver Steel Plant. However, while in the Navy he had begun drinking and smoking. He never married but continued living with mom and dad. My sisters all married and were rearing families of their own. Helen and Marion had homes in Brighton, Colorado, not far from my parents. Margaret and her husband were living in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

I was away at seminary when my dad suffered kidney failure. Fred drove him eighty miles every other day for dialysis treatments. Dad's condition worsened after seven years of this, and one day while they were traveling home from dialysis, my dad made Fred promise that after his death he would stop drinking completely and take care of my mother. My brother apparently promised Dad that he would, because he did stop drinking. For seven years after my father's death my brother, who had retired by then, continued living with mom. But he never stopped smoking, which eventually caused his death from lung cancer—just two years after my mother's death. For many years he cared for my mom as well as any male nurse would have.