

CHAPTER 23

THE LAST PORT OF CALL

June 30, 1992; 11:55 a.m. I have been sitting here in the backyard on the love seat that James gave his mother last Christmas: four little diving ducks diving for dinner out there; two muscovys; a big turtle surfacing to check things out; another muscovy swimming with her twelve ducklings close to shore to avoid, among other things, inquisitive turtles. Light southwest wind. If wind stays this safe I will "practice" my Hobie skills later in the day, when it cools off.¹ Why go in and write about this place. It is easier just to sit here and watch it happen. But I will go in and write to get this "It Just So Happened" happening peacefully put to rest.

ON OUR WAY. Offer made and accepted, it was time for the chaos of moving, which turned out not all that chaotic. First, 1415 Meadow Lane "For Sale". Within eight days, without realtor assistance, sign came down. Each June, July, August, faculty in many places start looking for new living quarters at their new faculty stomping grounds. So we inquired about who was coming to K-State. A professor named Cho Tsen and his wife, Kwei, and their several kids were coming, and, indeed, were in town right then looking for housing. Kwei Tsen liked what she saw and wanted it. Contract signed.

We, also, were a professor's family looking for new housing, so Mike and William C. headed back to Tampa.

ON THE WATER OR NO DEAL. Flying into Tampa, looking down: water, water, water: "Toto...I don't think we're in Kansas anymore."² Where did all that water come from!? But it was all out there, not very close to where the University of South Florida had been planted and was now growing.³ Wunderlichs informed us that just four houses north of their house there was a house for sale. We should check it out. We did. It was a nice house on a beautiful lake; thus fulfilling a Susan demand. If Mike had no passion to leave Manhattan and go to Tampa, Susan had a passion not to go there at all. But when shove came to push, she said, "O.K. Maybe if we can live by water it might be all right."

One-one-five-zero-three Carrollwood Drive was on water, but it was also more expensive than we had in mind. So we looked elsewhere, and we found a nice house on the banks of the Hillsborough River. About this

¹The Hobie is a last year's Christmas gift from James and Michael and Georgie. I prefer light, "careful" wind. In other wind Hobies sometimes sail up-side-down. Ask Jim.

²Wizard of Oz, 1939.

³About 15,000 students when we arrived here. Some 32,000 now.

house we got serious, until we checked out the high school. It was old and dilapidated and Susan had been attending one of the best high schools anywhere--both architecturally and academically. Carrollwood Drive, on Lake Carroll, was to be it.

PERSON TO PERSON. The owners, Roland and Mary Ethier, were on a vacation trip in their Air Stream Mobile Home, up the Florida east coast. They had left some information with their next door neighbor about where they would probably be at various times. What followed was something AT&T and Holiday Inn are probably still trying to figure out. In the motel room, Mike got on the telephone and started "person to person" calling from Cape Canaveral north. It took hours, but she succeeded. Then she handed William C. the phone to do the negotiating. There was no negotiating. The price was fixed. Period. Just as the price on Meadow Lane had been fixed. Period.

Ethiers wanted about \$4,500 more than we were getting from Meadow Lane. In those days that was a tidy sum. We had the money, just did not want to use it. Then Ethier proposed that he carry the difference at 6% interest. Why not? Keep our money in the bank where it, too, was drawing interest. Agreed. And once again without a realtor's fee.

HOLD THE FORT! Back in Manhattan. Closing with Tsens. Ready to go. No. No. Not yet. As already reported, Michael and Georgie drove off in that Volkswagen convertible not only in the direction of graduate school, but in the direction of a wedding day. Still in that VW, hair flying, they were on their way back to 1415 Meadow Lane and *that wedding day.*

That wedding took place in Manhattan, August 2, 1969, in Danforth Chapel, on the University campus. The Reverend Doctor William Calloley Tremmel presiding. Incidentally Georgie was fifteen minutes late in getting to the chapel. But she was worth the wait. Reception at 1415 Meadow Lane, with lots of people attending, including the Tribble family--mother, father and four grandparents; Jim and Gloria and Tina; and the Worrells who just "suddenly on purpose" showed up from Iowa. The reception was confined to main living rooms down stairs because the upstairs bedroom area was full of packed packing boxes.

Having accomplished the Yellow Brick Road back to Manhattan and the wedding, little VW was retired and a new Ford Maverick purchased, which ran happily back over that Yellow Brick Road all the way to a honeymoon in California: Disney Land and beaches.

NOW WE CAN GO. Wedding over. Final packing. Also, a yard sale. Susan could keep any money she could make in a yard sale. She did very well. But I goofed. I let her sell my riding mower without a prior agreement that since I would have to buy another mower in Tampa, the mower money ought to be mine. When I made that proposal later in Tampa, I heard two people say: "What?!" I said no more because those two people had not been speaking to me much recently, and it sounded that they might begin speaking in a fashion I could live without.

Indeed, the trip to Tampa was not an especially vocal trip most of the time. I had two girls in the car not especially pleased with what I was doing to them, and a dog and a cat who also seemed not exactly pleased. Ziggie and REW's displeasure did erupt vociferously in a motel room, in the middle of the night one night. REW, who had been sleeping with Susan, jumped off the bed on top of Ziggie and for a few minutes there was a startling amount of noisy in that room. I vowed silently that next time we moved I would ship all four of them and drive by myself.

MISSED THE BIG BLOW. We drove to Tampa in our 1963 white Pontiac. I mention this because that car had an *intentional* deficiency. When it was bought new, it was ordered with two special specifications: air conditioning and no radio. Air conditioning makes sense to everybody. But no radio? Yes, no radio. In spite of my early passion for crystal sets, I developed differently, with little affection for noisy distractions along the way.

No radio accounts for the fact that when we arrived in Tampa we were surprised to discover taped-over windows all over town. We soon learned that Tampa had been under a serious hurricane alert. But the hurricane had missed Tampa so we really had not needed that radio.⁴ However, since then all cars purchased have had radios as well as air conditioners.

THAT NEW PLACE. We arrived at the Lake Carroll residence August 14, 1969. Two weeks later Susan enrolled as a junior in Chamberlain High School, and her father settled in at USF. Other family members soon showed up for visits in Tampa: Michael and Georgie at Christmas time; and Jim, Gloria and Tina in a springtime visit.

In January 1971, Jim, Gloria and Tina moved to Florida. Initially they lived together in Holiday, Florida, some 30 miles from Tampa. Then in August, James and Gloria separated. A divorce was finalized a year later. Jim bought a house in Clearwater,⁵ a town about 30 miles from Tampa. Eventually Gloria bought a house in Holiday.⁶

ANOTHER ROPE AROUND MY NECK. As indicated earlier, I was confronted by two girls ready to hang me. Mike who was not going to live in that decadent south, and Susan whose high school life I was ruining. That other rope was a comment Mike made about our newest little sunflower Tina, "This is so sad. Now we won't be able to see that little girl grow up."

⁴That hurricane was named Camille. It was a category 5 (big as they get). Wind speed over 150 miles per hour. Surge over 18 feet. It hit Mississippi and Alabama. We had come by way of Georgia.

⁵Jim bought his house in August, 1974: 1411 North Osceola, Clearwater, Florida.

⁶Gloria's first house, bought in 1981, was at 1525 Darlington Road, in Holiday, Florida. In 1988 she bought the house where she now lives--4832 Phoenix Avenue, Holiday, Florida.

It was Gloria who saved me from that hanging. After they moved to Florida, Gloria saw to it that Tina and her Tremmel grandparents saw each other frequently: always on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and Thanksgiving, but also every Halloween little Tina would show up dressed for the occasion. On one year she was dressed as Miss Muffet, another year as Peter Pan--every year as something different. And in between special celebrations, Tina was often with us--usually with her Grandmother talking. They would talk, and talk, and talk. After Tina got school age, we had fun at special events she was involved in. She was a flute player, so we got to go to very special band and orchestra concerts. She was an honor student, so we got to sit in the audience and be proud. And we got to see her graduate from elementary school, junior high school, high school. Along the way we even had fun taking Tina with us on some of our vacation trips.

I referred to Tina as "our...little sunflower." But she was not the only sunflower. Sunflower being the state flower of Kansas gives us four sunflowers. All our girls are sunflowers: Susan, Georgie, Gloria, Tina.

I never had to learn to love sunflowers (as I did dandelions); I loved them right from the beginning. So much so that when we got to Florida where sunflowers do not grow, I planted some sunflower seeds. I had a hard time getting them to happen, but eventually I did get one sunflower to grow and bloom out in front near our driveway. One day (about 20 years ago) Gloria and Tina were visiting. When they got ready to go home Gloria backed down the driveway not quite. When she got to the street, she had my sunflower caught in her front bumper. Oh, well, you can't win them all.⁷

A TWO CAR FAMILY. In 1971 the Tremmel family went truly modern in automobiles. Not only did we have a car with air conditioning, we now became a two car family, and this new car not only had air conditioning, it had a radio. It was and is a maroon colored 1968 Continental named Big Red.⁸ In Big Red the three Tampa Tremmels took off across the country for Denver and a see-the-country-in-between vacation.

THAT STORMY SUSAN CALMLY ON HER WAY. In the spring of 1971, Susan graduated from Chamberlain High School with honors. In the fall she enrolled at USF.

Besides going to college, Susan also had a job working for a clinical psychologist named Espy Ball. Apparently Espy and his wife Kathleen took a real liking for Susan. The Balls live not far from the Tremmels and when It Just So Happens that Kathleen and Mike hit the grocery store at the same time, it is always Susan they talk about.

Susan was in the Department of Zoology at the University, but she also

⁷On June 11, 1992, on my birthday, I went outside and there along the driveway were two big, blooming (plastic) sunflowers--a note attached: "Maybe these will have a better chance. Happy Birthday! *The sunflower killer*".

⁸Big Red is still with us.

targeted classes in physical education where she became certified as another life guard in the family. During the summers of 1974 and 1975, she was the official life guard at White Sands Beach about an eighth of a mile right across the water from where I am now sitting: that water Susan had demanded. Her demand for "on the water" had worked out very well for her. She not only got a job on that water, but she became a fine water skier on that water, which should not surprise anybody. Susan could always match her athletic abilities with any boy around.

Susan graduated in March 1976 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Zoology. In May 1976, she left Tampa for Denver. And that was a day for tears. We put her on the airplane, went back to 11503 and sat down under our oak tree and cried. Our baby was gone. Then we went to see the Wunderlichs for soothing.

THE COLORADO ROOM. Ever since we bought 11503, I had fussed that there was not enough room for a study. Initially I had a desk in the bedroom, and poor Mike had her desk on the dining room table. I kept trying to think up a workable plan for a house extension, but I always tried to think it off our bedroom end of the house. To do that meant that the room would have to be a small room. Also, building it there might damage the roots of that oak tree just mentioned. I fussed and fussed, and then one day Mike said, "Why not build it off the other end of the house; off of the living room side out toward the lake?"

How dumb can I be?! Of course, that is where it should be, and where it now is: fifteen feet by thirty feet, beamed ceiling, paneled north wall, fire place; and for viewing the lake, biggest picture window the builder had ever installed. Completed December, 1976. This is not a Florida room, nor a Kansas room. This is the Colorado Room. It is, also, *the room*: the room we really live in. Here, right now, I am sitting at my computer writing, while behind me, across *the room* is Mike sitting at her big desk organizing financial matters and making money.

THE MEMORABILIA ROOM. In the Colorado Room is assembled the memorabilia of almost fifty years of our being together. On the wall directly in front of me, two Marlow Woodcuts (one of the preacher preaching; one of two people standing and singing in church);⁹ a photo of William C. back in Manhattan at a conference where Susie, driving from Denver, met him for an "I'm lonesome" meeting; a pair of pictures of two ends of a rainbow taken by Susie; a beautiful, large, alive with color picture given to us by Michael and Georgie; a large photo-picture of a Denver sunset skyline, including City Park Lake and that special band stand.

Also along this south wall, standing on the top of a low book shelf: a digital

⁹In Americus, Kansas there was a little art factory called Marlow Woodcuts, Inc. There they made marvelous little carved wood silhouette pictures. The church had two of them made for us for Christmas one year.

clock framing a wedding day picture of Susie and Russ;¹⁰ pictures of two churches--one at Americus and one at Dunlap; a small photo of my father when he was a young man, and another as I knew him; a little lamp and an anniversary clock from my parents' home; between lamp and anniversary clock--that sign from the door of the Windsor Church.¹¹

Along the east wall, under that big window: a terrific picture taken on the steps of the Americus Church of three handsome people: WCT, his beautiful wife, and ten year old Susan; a sundial given by James.

Along the north wall, on the right side of the fireplace, one of Michael's black and white prints;¹² on the left side of the fireplace a Rouault,¹³ given to us by Michael and Georgie; a bull horn given to WCT by his granddaughter; a hand carved table lamp carved by my Uncle Joe; Tina's picture leaning against the wall behind the lamp; a picture of St. Dunston, brought home from the Oxford, London excursion. Farther along, over The Mayor's Desk is a plaque that declares she really was.

On the west wall, more plaques proclaiming that WCT really did go to college and graduate school, really was ordained Deacon and Elder. Also, four dictionaries of perpetual usefulness.

On the fireplace hearth from east to west: two Colorado license plates; a little pile of Colorado rocks; a plaque identifying William A. as the representative of the Westminster Fire Insurance Company in Englewood, Colorado, beginning 1932; Mike's first washing machine,¹⁴ well used, but ready to go again anytime someone wants to borrow it; a winter scene, hand-tinted photo that hung on a bedroom wall at 3042 when WCT was a kid; three teddy bears, one of which William C. received on his first birthday. That bear sits not on the hearth, but on WCT's first little chair.

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO BACK AGAIN. On June 24, 1974, at age eighty-one, Mother Tremmel died. I officiated at the burial. Michael and Georgie helped me sort things out at 3042. And Michael, being the painter in the family, took on the job of painting the house interior. The house was rented for a year and a half.¹⁵ Then Susan moved in at Christmas Time in

¹⁰That wedding was ten years ago; yet the clock framing that picture is still running, never having had a new battery, and only two minutes off.

¹¹Friends, compose yourselves and enter here reverently...

¹²Entitled, "You Don't Really Know Me."

¹³"Sur la Route" - On The Road.

¹⁴Washboard, that is.

¹⁵House rented to Ron and Vickie Dean from October 1974 to December 1976. Friends of Michael and Georgie. Ron was a former Iliff student.

1976.

For nine months in 1980-1981, William C. took a sabbatical to test the waters of retirement. He and Mike bought an RV and took off on a slow journey from Tampa to Denver (actually Englewood). It was a fun trip (October to December, 1980), with six weeks with Susie in Englewood, and seeing Michael and Georgie regularly. But it was not a convincing trip. I chose not to retire.

In August 1981, the Tampa Tremmels were again in Englewood/ Denver, travelling in a preferred method--by air. When we first went to Tampa, we consoled ourselves about that 1800 miles between ourselves and the Colorado kids by saying, "It's only four hours by air." That fact is still a consolation.

It was during this August 1981 visit that two things happened: one was Russ, the other was Mother Tremmel's ghost. Susan gave a party, inviting a number of her young friends. One of those friends was very busy barbecuing for the hungry crowd. His name was Russell Young. The barbecue was excellent, and it was a wonderful party. During that party, seeing all the fun and joy in that house, I remarked that this was at last a happy house. Susan said, "Yes, but since I have been having happy parties, Grandma seems to have deserted the place."

I thought Susan was joking, but she wasn't. She told us that after she moved in, on a number of occasions, she would get a glimpse of Grandma, who seemed to be confused, and who then slipped quietly away. Furthermore, Susan insisted that a roommate she had taken in also reported Grandma's presence.

Michael was sitting there. He got a funny look on his face, and then he confessed. "Me, too," he said. He then reported that while he had been painting the interior of the house, he had on several occasions gotten the distinct impression that Grandma was also there. I am not willing to support those Grandma sightings nor deny them. Just let things be. Besides it was that Russ sighting that I was destined to have to deal with.

THE RUSSELL CALL. In November 1981, an elm tree at the south side of the Carrollwood house needed some trimming. So William C. got out ladder and chain saw and climbed up to trim it. What happened after that has been erroneously reported by various family members. I now report accurately that WCT did not cut off the branch he was sitting on. What happened was the tree, in great relief from its burden, suddenly leapt up and left the ladder standing alone.

Fortunately I had two friends nearby. Mike and Tina piled me into the car and took me to a nearby hospital emergency room. Patched up, I returned home. Next day I was still alive but groaning. And then the telephone rang. Mike answered. It was Susan. Sitting at the dining room table, I overheard the Tampa end of the conversation. "Yes, he's here, but he is not in the best of condition. Fell out of a tree yesterday." A quiet spell. Then, "Oh, he's not that hurt. I'm sure he will want to limp over here for this."

Susan said, "Hi, Dad. Russ wants to talk to you."

Russ, "Hi, Dad. I want to talk to you and tell you that Susan and I are in love and are planning to get married. I wanted to be the one to tell you."

I was astonished not by the announcement, but by the amazing, traditional dignity of this young man. He wanted, himself, to ask me for a blessing on this proposal. I knew immediately that this Russ was first-class.

PLANS, PLANS, PLANS. Susan came home in January to work on wedding dress. Then, in July, we went to Denver. Tina went with us. Then it was July 31, 1982: the day of another wedding at Christ [United] Methodist Church: that same church where William C. preached the best sermon Susan's great-grandfather ever heard, and where if William C. and Opal LaVerne had not stopped by one special day, Susan would probably not have stopped by either.

The calm, long experienced, Reverend Doctor William Calloley Tremmel was to officiate, but on the morning of the officiating, he was practically a nervous wreck. So finally, to keep from screaming, he went out and cut the lawn of Michael and George's Eudora Street house.¹⁶

Afternoon arrived. Christ Methodist Church. Down the aisle on Michael's arm came the bride!

"I will."

"I will."

They did! And then, after a big reception, took off for a honeymoon in Bermuda.

OTHER PLANS. Russ and Susan were not the only people who had been making plans. Michael and Georgie had been planning, too, meticulously planning, including a complete scale model for a new house. After the wedding, and a few days of rest, we had another ceremony: with one shovel and several spoons, a ground breaking ceremony for Michael and Georgie's new house at 8101 East Dartmouth, Denver, Colorado.

SIXTY TWO YEARS LATER. Speaking of houses, 3042 once again stood alone on Lincoln Street.¹⁷ It actually stood alone on lots 11 and 12, block 7, Strayers Broadway Heights, which Theodore A. Calloley had bought seventy-eight years earlier, for \$200. Lots and house had served the family well for a long time, but it was time: sold May 20, 1983. It was time, but we still drive by to check it out, from the street, each time we are in Englewood. It really looks pretty good.

MIKE AND HER NEW WORLD. Shortly after arriving in Tampa, Mike targeted the American Civil Liberties Union for her attention. She joined in the Fall of 1969, and was immediately elected to the Board of Directors where she served for the next ten years, and from 1974 to 1979 was Chair of that Board.

¹⁶Bought in 1971--1621 Eudora, Denver, Colorado.

¹⁷Russ and Susan moved into a town house Russ had already occupied, 835 Tennyson, Denver. In January 1984 Susan and Russ moved into a new house they built at 5972 South Taft Street, Littleton, Colorado, where they now live.

But then something began to happen. After years and years, both in Manhattan and Tampa, she began, in her words, "to burn-out on public service." Also, sometime along the way Helen Wunderlich told Mike that it was her long time rule not to give her time to anything she did not get paid for. That thought seemed to click. Mike resigned her ACLU responsibilities on November 28, 1979.

Something else had happened. Sometime prior to August 1975, Michael had phoned to talk to us. He had been trying to make it in the world as an artist, which, of course, few artists can ever do. He asked me what I would think of his studying to become a stockbroker. Taken completely by surprise, I said, "Well, I'm sure you would learn a lot". By August 28, 1975, he had learned enough to be licensed as a stockbroker, and a lot more.

When the former Commissioner, Mayor, ACLU Chair finally turned her back on free labor and no perquisites, she suddenly got a terrific idea. She asked for a big desk with a glass top for her birthday, so I bought her one--glass top and all. She also bought a vast number of file folders, and called her stockbroker son. Let money happen! And between them they have done very well. She keeps telling me, "Not to worry. Retire when you want to." But I don't want to--not quite yet.

THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE. Boulder, Emporia, Manhattan, even Windsor, were better places to live than Tampa, at least in my judgment. Why then was I never quite satisfied to stay in those other places? I was always looking for a new job somewhere else, but have never thought of looking for a new job since moving to Tampa? I asked myself this question the other day, for the first time ever, and the answer was obvious. This is where they finally let me do what I was trying to do the whole time: build a real department of religious studies.

And I did build it. I did so with the support of two marvelous assistants: Opal LaVerne "Mike" Tremmel, and Kandy Jill Lones. I brought Opal with me. Jill, already here, graciously consented to assist in the enterprise and has done so for twenty-two years.¹⁸ It is one thing to know how to finagle upper-level administration into approving hiring of new faculty, and to select topnotch faculty in the hiring, and to set curriculum, and to keep up with your own research and teaching. It is quite another thing to "run the office" especially in the endless rules and paperwork of a state institution. I could do the first, but without Jill the whole thing would have fallen apart from day one. And to boot, Jill is family, very special family.

In 1969, I was Chair of The Program of Religious studies at the University of South Florida. Today that initial program is a Department of Religious Studies offering the A.B. and M.A. degrees in Religious Studies. Also, today the Department has eight faculty, and another faculty person is being recruited. Something of the esteem in which the Department is held can be seen in a recent public report made by the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Of the 36 departments and programs in the College of Arts and Sciences,

¹⁸Jill, who was Department Secretary for twenty-years, is now Office Assistant.

Psychology, Marine Science and Religious Studies are, in his judgment, the top departments. More privately, that same Dean stated that he was targeting Religious Studies as the center of the study of the social sciences in the College. He also stated that he wants the Department to begin immediately to develop a Ph.D. program.

THERE COMES A TIME. The usual tenure of department chairs is about five years. After twenty-two years I decided it was time for WCT to step aside and begin to take more seriously what he has been doing (sometimes almost as a side line) since Emporia days: teach. So this past year that is what I have been doing--teaching. Believe me, I have no regrets in this decision. I am having a great time, with time to do it in. Jill is jealous. She says this isn't fair. I am on campus two or three days a week. She is still stuck with five.

During twenty-two years as Chair, I also managed to dabble in a bit of research and writing: author of eight books; author of chapters in three other book publications; editor of two books; author of twenty-five published articles, five book reviews, six poems in popular journals. At the moment there is a book reportedly in process of publication, and another in the computer.¹⁹

Also, of course, there is this *It Just So Happened*, to which it is about time to put a period.

NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL. I am fairly good in religion business, but not perfect. In religious studies there is something sometimes called metatechnology (beyond technology). The word stands for any attempt to introduce extra-natural, supernatural power into natural processes; e.g., to pray for rain, or perform a rain dance.

Sometime back we were having a drought in Tampa. As I turned to drive into our drive way, our neighbor Tom Stevenson, who lives across the street, waved me down. He said, "Bill, in the business you're in, can't you do something about this drought?" I answered, "I don't know, Tom. I'll see what I can do." *It Just So Happened* that the next day rain came. I dialed Tom's number. He answered and I asked, "Are you satisfied?" He laughed, and that was that.

But it wasn't that, because the rains did not stop in a reasonable time. They went on, and on, and on. And then the telephone rang. It was Tom. He asked, "Bill, we're getting too much, why don't you get it turned off?" I answered, "Sorry Tom, I can't dance backwards."

ROCKS IN THE ROAD! THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT! The year 1986 somehow slipped up on me. Fifty years since high school graduation from Englewood High! Anniversary planned, July 25. No problem. But on July 2, while delivering a brilliant lecture on things religious, I felt a little dizzy. Out of that I got an ambulance ride, and a little work over in an emergency room.

¹⁹The William C. name also appears 22 times in national and international biographical dictionaries; e.g., *Who's Who*.

Then I felt great. But they wouldn't let me go home. Next day I did not pass a tread-mill test. And five days later, I failed another test. The verdict was in. I needed something called aorta heart valve. July 11, job done. July 22, out of hospital. July 23, Mike and I, four hours by air, Denver. July 25, anniversary celebration; July 26, a special second celebration with special music friends at a party given by Michael and Georgie: Art Ellsworth, piano; Roy Rungden, bass horn; Herb Maddox, trombone; Hal Secor, trumpet.²⁰ That was one of the greatest parties I ever attended. And so it was that I got around my rock in the road.

But there were two more rocks in the road: September 11, 1986, Mike in the hospital for removal of kidney and adrenal gland.

And then March 9, 1987, the really scary rock. Only it wasn't a rock, it was a bus of the Denver transit system that, on an icy street, went out of control. Susan was on her way to work. She had parked her jeep in order to board a bus for downtown Denver. The bus hit the jeep and slammed it into Susan. She was rushed to the hospital. It was serious and we were all terrified. She made it through, but recovery was slow.

A FEW MORE HAPPIER THINGS. Charles Milligan began mixing up my life again. During a summer vacation in Colorado in 1987, he asked me if I would consider delivering a paper on William Henry Bernhardt, one of the great Iliff professors we had both studied with back in Iliff days. The paper would be delivered in Oxford England in summer a year later. He told me the paper would be a part of the international conference of the Highlands Institute For American Religious Thought. The Institute, Charles told me, was made up of theological thinkers who are actually trying to live in and make sense of theology in the 20th century; i.e., envisioned reality in terms of process theology.²¹

I agreed and so Mike and I, in August, 1988, were in England. And we had a grand time. Let me dramatize my grand time in this fashion: Through my adult life I have had a recurring dream. It is evening and I am walking through a town somewhere. The buildings and houses are old and classical. The whole place has a feeling of richness and quietness and peacefulness. It is a place I want to be. And then abruptly, I am not asleep, but I am in that place. The town is called Oxford, and it is everything and more than I have ever dreamed of. This was it! I resolve to stay here forever. But circumstances forbid my resolution, so I make a different deal. I put in a reincarnation order: When I am reincarnated, it is to be in Oxford, England.

²⁰Also attending were Hal's wife Bernie; Roy's wife Laura; Art's wife Margaret; Herb's son; Susan and Russ.

²¹Process theologians attempt to understand the world in terms of empirical evidence. God is not conceived of in supernatural dimensions, but as some natural part of cosmic natural process. You can get more of this in a book I have in mind to write someday.

MAYORING BRITISH STYLE. Mike was intrigued, also, but I don't think she made any reincarnation requests. What she did do was get a mayor's necklace. We stayed in the dormitory of Somerville College.²² From the college, surrounded by a high stone-wall fence and heavy iron gates, we could walk a mile or so and be downtown. And on the way we would pass St. Michael-at-the-Northgate Church: a beautiful little Anglican Church where we sometimes dropped in and/or often sat on a bench outside watching the world drift by.

On one occasion we discovered that a big affair was being planned, which would include a flower decorated church and a celebration of some kind of Oxford - Lieden (England/Holland) 300 year old connection called the "twinning".²³ We decided to go.

Among others at the celebration was the Lord Mayor of Oxford. Her appropriated mayoral attire included official necklaces.

William nudged Mike and whispered, "You didn't have any necklaces when you were Lord Mayor." Mike, with a look, indicated that William was to behave himself and be attentive to the service. Which he did and was from then out...The service was closed with the singing of national anthems--first the Dutch and then the English. During the Dutch we listened attentively. But with the English anthem, we Colonials ceased being simply spectators and became participants. To be sure, the words were a little different. The Britons sang, "God save the queen..." The Colonials sang, "My Country 'tis of thee..." But nobody seemed to notice, except, of course, we Colonials.[Next day, Saturday, August 20] The voyage home time had come. But not before we must correct a long time error: the Lord Mayor's necklaces. William insisted. Shopping they went, and in a little shop at number 4 Turl Street, just off High Street, the error was corrected. The Lord Mayor (retired) of Manhattan, Kansas finally has proper necklace adornment."²⁴

Charles was right again. We not only had a great time in England, I finally found a true, after Iliff, intellectual home: the Highlands Institute of American Theology, which meets each year in Highlands, North Carolina, and has become a yearly must on our calendar. Also, as a must, is the coming 1993 conference at St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland.

²²One of Oxford Universities female colleges; the one where, among others, Margaret Thatcher was educated.

²³For details try research on William (a Dutchman) and Mary (an Englishwoman princess) taking over the throne of England in 1688.

²⁴From *The Oxford Excursion--Or The Two Babes In Wonderland*, William C. Tremmel.

MORE GRADUATIONS AND HONORS. On May 8, 1989, James graduated receiving an Associate of Arts degree with honors from St. Petersburg Junior College. And on April 27, 1991, he was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics Education, from the University of South Florida, and received State of Florida teacher certification.

Also, on April 27, 1991, Tina was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics from the University of South Florida--Magna Cum Laude.

Saturday, April 27, 1991 was a day of *celebration*.²⁵

A FIRST CLASS HAPPENING YET TO HAPPEN. This report will be finished before it happens, but it was not finished before the announcement of the yet to happen happening:

This day I will marry my friend,
the one I laugh with, live for,
dream with, Love...
Because you have shared in their lives
by your friendship and love
Daniel Majchrzak
and
Tina Laree Tremmel
together with their parents
invite you to share in their joy
on Saturday, the fifteenth day of August
nineteen hundred and ninety-two
at one o'clock in the afternoon
University of Tampa Dome Room
Reception following ceremony

THE BEGINNING AND END. This document happened because It Just So Happened that two important things happened: Lin and Tina asked for it, and that pretty girl kissed me on that very first date.²⁶

²⁵Both James and Tina are back in school working on mater's degrees.

²⁶This It Just So Happened report is finished July 15, 1992.