

From California to South Dakota.

This next move in our family life would seem to be a drastic one. Environmentally there are perhaps no two areas of our country as diverse as these two states. But we had lived in the mid-west and so when the call came to serve the church in Beresford, S. D. we did not as far as I remember consider the change in these terms. ~~to~~ The terms of the call were not too favorable. The salary ~~was~~ offered was less than we had been receiving in Oakland. Not enough was offered for moving expenses. Beresford people were ultra conservative. But we felt, after prayer, a measure of peace in accepting the call, feeling as we did that our work in Oakland was finished and a new work was opening up for us. So in the summer of 1950 we loaded a trailer with our household goods and travelled eastward.

We purchased a ^{RV} tent, believing it would save us a little money in lieu of motel costs. It proved to be a good tent. We as a family used it on the way to

Beresford. It cost \$75-, a good price in those days. It was used for several years in our family. I remember one winter spent at the Grand Canyon as we traveled thru Arizona. It was some time but the winter was cold - so cold. But we remained the winter - all six of us in that tent. As we prepared breakfast the deer in the park insisted staying close - almost eating our food off the table.

We traveled thru Colorado and visited with Mr John Bonn in Greeley for a while. John Bonn and his family had lived in Walker and it was to him that credit should go for the church in Walker, ~~but~~ his persistence and labor carried us thru to the erection of the building and the organization of the church. It was the Bonn family who donated the lot on which the building stood.

On arriving in Beresford we were welcomed by the people there. We unloaded the trailer and started out the next day for St. Paul where we were scheduled to be for the wedding of Gordon Adlington to Bonnie Anderson. However there was a death in one of the

beneficial families so we came back for
the funeral to conduct the funeral and
then journeyed back to St. Paul for the
wedding.

The Brooklyn church - so-called
because it was located in Brooklyn
township was one of our free churches
strongest rural churches at the time.
The people were good. There was a
splendid group of young people in the
congregation. The building was of
red brick in the design of so
many of our protestant churches of the
time. The church cemetery lay on a
lot just north of the church.

To live in a farming community was good
for all of us in the family. The pace of life is
not as accelerated as the city. What the
church lacked in generosity in salary
it made up to us in food gifts - a
locker was provided us by the church
which was always full of meat and
sometimes fish. The competitive
spirit seen absent - no competition
was felt from the activities of other
churches in the community. Each
congregation was faithful to its own.

A certain respect was expressed by the community for religion and the Church. When a funeral train passed a field in which a farmer was working, he would most likely turn off his tractor, dismount, remove his cap and stand in reverent attention until the train had passed. No school events were scheduled for Wednesday nites. That Wednesday nites were reserved for the church. Members of the congregation come to church clothed in their "Sunday best" - the life style of the people was conservative.

~~The~~ In our home we lived comfortably. The passage was quite adequate, located in town. My mother, "Nanny", was with us partly, dividing her time between our home and Esther's. Rachel did a remarkable job running the home. There was always plenty of food, and a family of six or seven to enjoy everything she made. Cream puffs were a favorite of all, and the people of the church never failed to produce the cream. Sundays were special with pearon rolls for breakfast and a lovely roast for dinner.

Somehow, I felt myself weary in the work in Bereaford. Taking myself always far more seriously than I ought, I was usually anxious and restless, Saturdays when the children were home from school and I should be in a playful mood found me often downcast and inwardly worried for Sunday's sermon. Depression has always been with them my life, I do not know if the seriousness of the ministry caused much of my depression or the anxiety over the people's spiritual state and the necessity of being fresh in preaching was the cause. No doubt there is an inherent melancholy in my nature. Whatever the cause I live with constant regret that I was not able to give to Rachel and to the children a joyous and glad home life in the growing up years of the children. It should have been otherwise.

During the years we were in Bereaford our school - Trinity - was experiencing difficult days. De Koster was acting President at the time - upon

his invitation I was led to consider teaching at the school. Teaching was something I had always wanted to do. But I had no inner peace about accepting the call. Two I lingered over it for two or three months. In retrospect, I am convinced it would not have been a good thing for me, or my family.

We had been in Bensford for almost five years when we ~~did~~ received the call to pastor the Elm F.F.C. which was then in the process of relocating from 78th + Indiana in Chicago to Oak Lawn in the S.W. suburbs. The congregation was passing thru a difficult time. It had no building in Oak Lawn. McDonald public school was on 99th + Kostner was rented for S.S. and worship each Sunday morning.

The move was almost a catastrophe for our family. The congregation provided us with a most adequate and acceptable parsonage a short distance from a fine view of property they had purchased at 100 + Kostner for a future building. But the congregation had no building in

which to meet or carry on a church program
and some members of the congregation
were not sure they wanted to move.
The congregation had veritably no
young people. We had left such a
fine group of young people in Beerford.
The Oak Lawn H.S. was large - 1600 - and
David, Paul & Betty were to attend
there where they had not a single
friend. Joan attended the Donald school.
The loneliness we felt and the loneliness
the children endured was devastating.
Had I known what the move was to cost
us in emotional distress I am sure I
would not have made the move. We
I stayed and built a church and
ministered to the congregation for 13 1/2
years. Each of the children graduated
for O.L.H.S. and went on to higher
education from our O.L. home.
God blessed the work and it was
not long before our new church
was filled and the spirit in the
congregation was warm and helpful.
But as a family we paid a heavy
price - or so it seems to me.

Writing in retrospect about family days in Oak Lawn, there are deep and hidden feelings difficult to define. Each of the children passed through their adolescent years in Oak Lawn and those years were ~~not~~ ^{not} so ^{as} for them as for all adolescents. I remember my own adolescent years. They were not happy years. Communication between myself and my parents ~~was~~ without any significance. I worried much over my spiritual state for I perceived no assurance that it was "well with my soul". A good self image was never to be mine. Companionship with other young people — I had none. The church our family was attending was not prospering — no young people. There was loneliness — so much of it. At H. S. we had no extra curricular activities — nothing to encourage social grouping.

Is there anything positive to say? In behalf of Mother & Dad, I can truly say they lived ~~to~~ a strong Christian in the home and community. Discipline was many times rigid. There was little room for humor and no room for "fun". Mother's personality

dominated the home, and she was always religiously righteous. There was woven into our lives (Esther & mine) a deep seated desire to live a truly Christian life. We did have so-called "revival meetings" in our church with revival sermons and the altar calls. I remember ~~one~~ on one occasion responding to an invitation to come forward and kneel with others at the altar. I expected an experience — an inner change as so many testified to. But it never came — hasn't come all these years, in the manner in which I had expected it. No so-called conversion experience ever came to me.

On the other hand, I have never felt a rebellion in my heart toward God or ~~the people~~ my parents, or the church or the Christian life style we were exposed to in those days. I have never had the desire for anything other than a true Christian life.

Perhaps the most dominant Biblical principle in my life has been that which has led me constantly to look for God's guidance in my life. I have believed that God leads His children along. Proverbs 3: 5, 6 have been a guidpost for me. I fear that I have leaned on this principle overly much, I have "waited on the Lord" when I should have been active and aggressive. But in the crises of my life I have seen God's guidance: my going to M. S. T., my going to N. Minnesota to work with Al Eggenlin, my marriage to Rachel, the call to California — surely God guided in these steps and so many others.

Now in old age I still look to God for guidance. All is dead when I am not conscious of His leading and His presence.