

PREFACE

*W*e have often been urged to write the story of Christian Renewal Center—how it came into being and how God has provided so miraculously for its existence and growth. It is the story that amazes us because we started with the dream of one lodge somewhere in the mountains of California. How that dream was transferred to Oregon and has grown to include forty acres and fourteen buildings causes us to stand in awe of God’s wondrous works and ways.

To tell this story we need to go further back than just the beginning of Christian Renewal Center because the foundational stones for this part of our lives and ministry had been laid earlier.

Our lives have been blessed by the many wonderful retreats and many great teachers we have sat under and by many inspired writers. We will mention some of them whom we have had the privilege of meeting and entertaining in our home. In comparison to people like Dr. J. Edwin Orr, the well-known authority on revival, Corrie ten Boom, the heroine of World War II prison camps and Gladys Aylward, whose story was featured in the film, *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, our story seems small and insignificant. But here it is with the hope and prayer that others who feel insignificant might be encouraged. If God could bless our feeble efforts and forgive our failures, He can do the same for you and bless the dreams He has given you.

How It All BEGAN

The phone was ringing as I walked into the kitchen on that warm July day. “Would you answer it?” Mom asked. I ran to the phone, “Hello?”

“Hello Eunice, this is Pastor Fuhr. My wife and I were wondering if you’d like to go with us to Bible Camp tonight. I just talked to Joan and Juanita, and they said they’d like to go.”

“That sounds good to me,” I responded. “What time do we leave? I can drive in to town to meet you!”

And so the arrangements were made. The Bible Camp at Colton was about 30 miles from my home. I had spent many wonderful times there in my teen years. It was there I had made a commitment to the Lord as a teenager. I could remember coming home from camp riding on cloud nine. My heart was full and running over with praise to God, so much so that hoeing the weeds out of the long rows of corn was no longer drudgery but a time of joy as I sang and praised the Lord. Jesus had become real to me, and I was eager to share with my friends how good it was to know the Lord.

Going to camp for a week each summer had been one of the highlights of the year. Living on a farm, our family did not take any family vacations as there was always too much harvesting to be done. But we children always had the privilege of going for a week of camp. We earned our own money to pay for camp by picking berries for the

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neighbors. Yes, Colton Bible Camp was a special place to all of us. This year my parents had gone to the opening of camp on Sunday. The camp ran from Sunday to Sunday. Parents would bring their youth up and spend the day. The morning and afternoon services were held in a rustic outdoor cathedral. At noon, the families often joined together with other friends or relatives for a picnic. Following the afternoon meeting the parents would head for home, leaving their offspring at camp.

This year my parents had taken my younger sister, Olga, who was still in high school. My brother, Silas, and I had stayed home to milk the cows and do the evening chores so our folks could have the day to themselves. I was between my Junior and Senior year in college and was saving all my earnings for college expenses. Besides, it was basically a teenage camp.

When my parents came home they told me of the good day they'd had and of friends from the surrounding towns they'd seen. They also mentioned that one of the guest speakers was a young, single pastor from California. Later I shared that bit of information with my best friend, Joan, and had laughingly said, "Maybe we should have gone to camp this year after all!"

Now with the invitation from Pastor Fuhr, we would have our chance to see for ourselves what this young pastor was like! That evening, as we seated ourselves in the outdoor cathedral we started looking around to see if we could spot him. We had arrived a little early so we were able to watch as the people entered. It wasn't long before a very handsome man came in, looked around the auditorium and then seated himself on the front row. We nudged each other and said in unison, "We really should have come to camp this year!" But since we were only there for the evening, we wouldn't even have a chance to meet him. Thus we decided to turn our thoughts to the meeting, which was just beginning.

After we sang a few gospel songs it was time for the speaker. To our disappointment it was not the young pastor's turn to speak that night but rather an older pastor. As was the customary practice, the two guest speakers spoke on alternate evenings.

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Following the service it was campfire time. Everyone would gather around a big fire for the singing of choruses and for sharing testimonies. We sang a few songs, and then the leader said, "What are you thankful for? What has been helpful in your Christian walk with the Lord?" Several people shared, and then I spoke up and said, "I'm thankful I have been able to go to a Christian college."

Others continued sharing. Then the pastor leading the gathering said, "I notice many of you are sitting with the same people you came with. We want to encourage you to get acquainted with others. Now before we close I want you to get up, look around and then sit down beside someone you don't know and introduce yourself." There was a sudden movement of people, and before I knew it the handsome young pastor had seated himself beside me! He introduced himself and said,

"I heard you say you are going to a Christian college. I was wondering which one." And so our little time of getting acquainted began. How could I have known this young man had been looking over the audience that evening hoping to see the one who would be the answer to his prayers.

Before coming to camp, Allan had been reminding the Lord that he needed a wife. Following graduation from seminary, he spent one year alone in Lynwood, California, starting a new church. Everything was going well, except for the need for a life-mate. It seemed to him as he had prayed about this before coming to camp that the Lord had said, "You'll meet her when you go to Oregon for Bible Camp." Just that afternoon he had been walking beside the stream and praying, "Lord, I thought you told me I'd find my life-mate here. I've been looking, and I haven't seen one likely prospect!"

There wasn't much time to get acquainted. Pastor and Mrs. Fuhr were ready to go home. "Will you be coming up again?" Allan asked as I started to leave.

"I'm not sure," I replied. "I'm kept pretty busy helping on the farm."

Will I have a chance to see him again? I was thrilled for the little bit of attention he had paid me, but would I see him again?

Fortunately, others wanted to go up to camp during the week. My cousin was the next one to call and invite me to go with her. That night Allan and I had a longer time to visit. I was thrilled to say the least. In fact, I felt so excited I hardly slept at all that night.

More trips were made to camp. On Saturday night I stayed overnight since my sister had an extra bunk in her dorm. That night Allan and I had a long walk. It was lightly raining so we shared Allan's umbrella. "I'm surprised an attractive girl like you hasn't already been spoken for," Allan said. I responded,

"Well, I am writing to a boy in the Service, but it is not serious." The more we shared that night and the next afternoon, which was the closing day of camp, we became increasingly convinced our lives were meant to be together forever.

It was time to part, but we knew it was only for a short time. I had one more year of college to finish. He had to go back to his growing church in California. Our courtship took the form of letter writing. We wrote every day. We shared our thoughts through our letters and felt we became as well acquainted that way as we would have through dating.

Allan was very creative in his letter writing—much more so than I was. In one letter Allan wrote:

I had been walking a few days in one of the loveliest flower gardens I had ever seen. The flowers in this garden were fresh and pure, of many varieties and shades and yet also beautiful. Then one evening as the day was drawing to its close, my eyes fell upon the most beautiful of all flowers. I'm sure it must have been transplanted from another place, or I would have noticed it before.

I quietly slipped over near the beautiful flower. The gardener, or rather one of the gardeners, came at that moment in among his flowers and began talking to them before they shut their eyes in sleep. I tried to listen, but it wasn't easy because very close to me was this

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lovely flower. Although I, too, was supposed to be listening to the gardener I would glance over at the flower. Did I ever tell you the flower let me touch it so I knew it was real and not just a dream? The fairy tale ends like all stories should. The flower said, "Come back for me in a year, and then I'll go to your house and brighten it up for you." And so they lived happily ever after!

Another time, in response to one of my letters he wrote:

The world is making such fast progress, so many new discoveries are being made one can hardly keep up with them. There has been a new discovery called "Eunilettercillin." To briefly describe this new discovery I might say it's a mysterious paper with special writing on it, held about two feet away from the viewer. From this paper there emits mysterious powers and forces. For example, the force that passes from these pages to the person viewing them can contain such elements as love, joy, happiness or satisfaction. These forces also can act in entirely different ways such as sending the viewer to dream land, or lifting him up above the clouds. I tell you it's a marvelous discovery.

It will even brighten up a person, create conversation, start birds singing, hearts beating, joy bells ringing, drive clouds away and even create sunshine. Here's something else about it, too. You can use the same mysterious pages over and over again, and their power doesn't diminish. In spite of this I have been getting a fresh supply of these pages every day. Wouldn't you say I'm a lucky guy?

At Christmas time, Allan flew up to visit me and get acquainted with my family. Then during Easter vacation, I flew down to California to see my future home and get better acquainted with his parents.

We were married on a Friday night, May 31, 1946 at my home

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church in Silverton. Pastor Fuhr, who had been responsible for taking me to camp, preached the wedding sermon. Allan's father conducted the marriage ceremony. Of course we had no idea at that time that our life together, which began at camp in Oregon, would some day find us establishing a camp not far from the place we met.

