



Andrew Forbat

# Give him Pentothal!

A JEWISH DOCTOR'S JOURNEY

of faith in Jesus and service  
on three continents

So titled because my medical practice both in the West and on the Mission Field has been in the specialty of anesthesiology.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I might preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Ephesians 3:8 (KJV)

## **PREFACE**

*How does a nice Hungarian Jewish boy become a Christian missionary in India?*

*From time to time, friends, have urged me to write down the story of my life. Perhaps this is because, despite the popular belief that the Christian life is dull and boring, they know that God has allowed me to experience life in Hungary, England, Egypt, India and the USA. Certainly, my life has been anything but boring and it has been wonderful to experience God's leading and provision through my 82 years of life.*

*I am thankful for the many opportunities for service in many places and I thank God for the inspiration and encouragement I received from Christian friends on the way. I want to pay special tribute to my wife Gwen, who has been my companion for 48 years. Her wisdom and common sense have saved me from many mistakes, while her loyalty and love have been an anchor during times of difficulty and uncertainty.*

*I also want to pay tribute to the influence of Scouting in my early life and for the fellowship and discipleship received as a young Christian through friends in Inter-Varsity.*

*I pray that this testimony may be an encouragement to other believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and a challenge to faith for those who have yet to take the step of faith. Especially I pray that it will be a blessing to my family, children and grandchildren in their journey of faith in Christ.*

# INTRODUCTION

Many would consider it strange that I refer to myself as a Jewish Christian. Some would even say that the term is an oxymoron because, according to some, a Jew cannot be a Christian. May I ask you to consider some facts?

- Jesus himself was an orthodox Jew, who kept and fulfilled the Law of Moses perfectly. His earthly descent was from the tribe of Judah of the lineage of King David. He came as the Jewish Messiah. (Christos is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Moshiach). However, His mission was not to set up an earthly Kingdom, but to change men's hearts.
- The Virgin Mary was Jewish on both sides of her family, as was her husband Joseph from his family. Both were from the tribe of Judah.
- All the twelve Apostles were Jewish
- The Apostle Paul was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. He was a Pharisee and a strict observer of the Jewish Law. He put his faith in Jesus after Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road. He suffered greatly for this faith, but he never forgot his Jewish heritage.
- Every author of the Bible was Jewish, with the exception of Luke, who recorded the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.
- The first Christian church was composed exclusively of Jews.
- The first controversy in the early church was not whether a Jew could become a Christian, but rather, whether a Gentile could be admitted as a Christian without first becoming a Jew!

So, dear readers, accept the possibility and the propriety of a Jew placing his trust in Jesus (Y'shua) and to recognize Him for what He claimed to be – Son of God and our Savior and Lord.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	I
Introduction	II
Contents	III
1. Background	1
2. Early Memories	3
3. A New Country	8
4. War Years	12
5. Growing Up	15
6. Enemy Alien	17
7. Life Changing Confrontation	19
8. The Young Doctor	27
9. Military Service	31
10. Pursuing a career	36
11. A Call from Afar	38
12. Vellore	40
13. Tragedy and a Change of Plans	43
14. Joined Together	47
15. The New World	51
16. Back to India	56
17. Return to New York	61
18. Move to the Mid-West	64
19. Planning Retirement	67
20. Looking Back – And Forward	71

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND

The Great War<sup>1</sup> was finally over. At tremendous cost of men and materials, the Allies (Great Britain and France, joined later by the United States) defeated Germany and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The Peace Treaty with Germany was concluded in Versailles in 1919. The Treaty of Trianon in 1920 sealed Hungary's fate. Austria and Hungary were separated and Charles, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary was sent into exile. Of all the defeated nations, only Hungary lost a major part of its territory. Previously its borders were the Carpathian Mountains, rich in minerals and natural resources. Now, under the Peace Treaty of Trianon, the northern part was ceded to new Czechoslovakia, the southern to Yugoslavia and, bitterest blow of all, Transylvania (Erdély) to Romania. On the west, a narrow strip was transferred to Austria. Hungary retained the agricultural land of the Plains.

A period of Communist government under Béla Kún followed the abolition of the Monarchy. Béla Kún<sup>2</sup> was a lapsed Jew, who had been a prisoner of war in Russia at the time of the Communist Revolution of 1917. He became a Communist leader in Hungary and formed a dictatorship. After a failed anti-communist uprising, he organized the "red terror" and executed about 600 people. His regime lasted only a few months, but it caused much resentment. When the counter-revolution, led by Admiral Horthy,<sup>3</sup> displaced the Communists, there was a period of anti-Semitism known as the "White Terror". Men, suspected of being Jewish were stopped in the streets, and if proved to be Jewish (by the fact that they were circumcised<sup>4</sup>), many "disappeared", never to be heard of again.

By this time, my father, George (György) Forbát was in his late teens. He had already been in the Army during the last 3 months of the war. After demobilization, he entered the University of Budapest in order to study medicine. During the period of anti-Semitism, a law had been passed ("*numerus clausus*")<sup>5</sup> establishing quotas for the number of Jews who could attend the University. The majority of Hungarian Jews lived in the Capital, and Jews were among the most educated professional classes. The country-folk were largely peasant farmers and laborers, most of whom were not particularly interested in higher education. Consequently, when counted against the entire population, the numbers of Jews in the University was disproportionately large. Thus, when

---

<sup>1</sup> Before World War II, World War I (1914-18) was referred to as the "Great War"

<sup>2</sup> for historical details see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bela-Kun>

<sup>3</sup> see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikl%C3%B3s\\_Horthy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikl%C3%B3s_Horthy)

<sup>4</sup> In Europe it was (and still is) very unusual for Gentile males to be circumcised

<sup>5</sup> literally: closed numbers. Hungary was the first modern nation to pass distinctly anti-Semitic laws; the "*numerus clausus*" laws of the early 1920's were aimed at restricting the access of Jews to higher education. In the late 1930s, more specifically anti-Semitic laws followed. <http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Hungary>

the quotas were imposed, George was expelled. Unable to study at the University, George went into business with his next older brother, Imre, on the Budapest Stock Exchange.

George was the youngest of 6 brothers. His father, Lajos (Louis) was an insurance assessor, married to Zsofi (Sophia) Reich. He was born as Lajos Freud, but in 1906 he changed his name to Forbát to make it sound less Jewish and more Hungarian. Their sons, Sándor (Alexander), Arthur, Oscar, Jancsi (Eugene), Imre (Emerich) arrived at yearly intervals. Then, 4 years later, hoping for a girl, Sophia became pregnant again and my father was born on Aug 7, 1899.

The oldest son, Alexander (Sándor) became a physician and married Alma Polnauer, the daughter of Miksa (Nicholas) and Estella Polnauer. Alma had a younger sister, Jolán (Yolande). When he was only 16 years old, George fell passionately in love with her. Yolande was tall, beautiful and 4 years older than George, who was much shorter than his beloved Jolán. When walking on hilly Buda together, they always arranged that George would be on the higher side so as to minimize the difference! At first, she had no interest in this 'schoolboy', regarding him as a 'pal' rather than a suitor. Nevertheless, when he returned after the war, he continued to woo her and three years later, they were married on May 5, 1921.

Having experienced the "White Terror", my father decided that if such a situation was to be averted in the future, Jews and Gentiles (whom he equated with Christians) should intermingle. He thought that this would create a better understanding between them. In that period, many Jews "converted" to the Roman Catholic Church - not out of conviction, but to lose the social stigma of being Jewish and so, to be eligible for jobs and promotions unavailable to Jews. To his credit, my father, though not religious, never converted to any form of Christianity for the sake of material advantage.

## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY MEMORIES

Budapest, Hungary's Capital is a beautiful city. The river Danube divides the city into Buda on the hilly west Bank, while Pest lies on its eastern flat land. Our apartment was in Pest, one block from the Promenade along the bank of the River. From our 4<sup>th</sup> floor window we could watch the river barges and see Buda on the opposite bank. The apartment was only a few hundred yards from the magnificent Parliament building. Apartment living was the norm in those days. Mortgages were not available and only very wealthy people could afford to own a house. My father's parents lived one flight below our apartment and we saw them often.

I was born on December 23, 1924 and my brother John arrived on November 26, 1928. My father decided that his sons should have both Hungarian and international names. András (=Andrew) and János (=John) were typically Hungarian and our international names were Fedor and Egon respectively. It was a nice thought! Dad did not realize that our 'foreign' names had little recognition abroad, whereas Andrew and John were from the Bible and used all over the world.

My grandparents were more religious than my parents. I remember going down to their apartment for the Seder evening at Passover. The house had to be searched to be sure that no leavened bread was present. It was my job to recite the "*Mani Stanu*" - Hebrew for "Why is this night different from any other night?"

My mother was a beautiful lady and Dad made sure that she always had the finest clothes. He himself was always well dressed. Elegance was vital to them, irrespective of financial circumstances! Mother was a loving and gentle lady, well educated in the classics and beside Hungarian, she spoke fluent German and Italian. Dad was a wizard at mental arithmetic. He was cheerful, optimistic and popular with his friends



*My parents*



*With my grandparents in Budapest*

My grandmother on mother's side was also a frequent visitor. She was a widow – her husband died of pneumonia before I was born. Born in Trieste, she considered herself Italian even though at the time that city was under Austrian rule. The Italian word for grandmother is “nonna”, and all the family affectionately called her “Noni”. She had strong likes and dislikes. As a child, I resembled mother, but John was more of a Forbat. Consequently, Noni favored me but disliked John!

John was often sick when he was a baby. On one occasion at home, the doctor took blood from my father to inject it into my little brother. I do not know whether the blood was typed and cross-matched! At any rate it must have been compatible and John's health improved! When he was about 2, John caught pneumonia and became dangerously ill. Antibiotics had not yet been heard of. Our maid was an uneducated country girl (it was quite usual for middle class families to have servants) and she was considered to be rather simple. She would kneel by the cot, praying for little John. My parents ridiculed her – but John recovered! On another occasion John had otitis media and the ear specialist came to the house. He performed a myringotomy<sup>6</sup> on John without anesthesia. John screamed and I was petrified!

---

<sup>6</sup> incision in the eardrum, to allow pus to escape



*My brother John and I in Budapest*



*NONI*

When I was 5 years old, my tonsils were removed before starting elementary school. General anesthesia was considered to be too dangerous for that procedure. The operation was to be performed in the sitting position. Having been assured that it would not hurt, I could not understand why I was immobilized and strapped into the doctor's operating chair. He put a gag in my mouth and sprayed cocaine into my throat. In fact, the operation was extremely painful and I made up my mind never again to trust a doctor! Visits to the dentist were also dreaded. Drilling and extraction of milk teeth were done without even local anesthesia.

The family was close. We spent much time together with my cousins. They were Susan (Imre and Edith's daughter) and Elly and Vera, children of Sándor and Alma. At other times, we went to Parliament Square to play with other children. .

Because my birthday was at the end of December, I entered first grade as one of the youngest in the class. Boys and girls were segregated and the school had a separate entrance for boys and girls. Our teacher (Mrs. Kindlovics) was an ugly, stern woman, who taught us the basics of reading and writing. She would never strike a boy; instead she would pick up his arm and slam his palm several times against the desk. The pain was inflicted by the desk, not the teacher! I was usually a 'good boy' and avoided trouble. The class moved up together during the 4 years of elementary school, although we had a different teacher each year. Once a week we separated for religious teaching. Catholics were taught by the Priest, Protestants by a Pastor and Jewish boys by the Rabbi. This is how I first learned the stories about the Patriarchs in the book of Genesis.

In Hungary children were taught patriotism, even in elementary school. Much of this focused on the restoration of the pre-war borders of Hungary. Every day, we recited a "Creed"

*I believe in one God  
I believe in one Fatherland  
I believe in divine justice  
I believe in Hungary's resurrection*

Following 4 years of elementary school, one had the choice of attending either an academic middle and high school known as "Gymnasium" (no connection to physical training), or a trade school. I entered the Gymnasium before my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and continued to the end of the second year. My father was educated in the same school and the mathematics teacher who taught him, taught our class 25 years later. German was taught in the first grade and Latin was deferred till the third year. We left for England before then, so I never had a chance to study Latin as part of my education.

Besides day school, I also attended a music school for violin lessons. As a very small child, my parents had taken me to a restaurant where a gypsy orchestra was playing. I ran from the table and stood awed in front of the musicians. Noni, who in her younger days was a good violinist, also encouraged me. I had a desire to learn and besides, a violin was more affordable than a piano! During the 4 years I progressed to playing Beethoven's Minuet in G, and later the first movement of Mozart's Sonata No. 4 in E minor, at the music school recital. Practicing at home was not always smooth. On one occasion, while practicing, John kept yelling "out of tune! Out of tune!", until I was so angry that I slammed the bow against the table with enough force to break the bow.

-o0o-

For vacations we would often go to Lake Balaton. However, during the summer of 1932, my mother and her sister Alma took Elly, Vera, John and me to Fano, a resort on the Adriatic coast of Italy. Our German Governess, Tante<sup>7</sup> Dita also came with us while our fathers stayed in Budapest. During this vacation Elly taught me to swim in the sea. On the beach, I befriended a little girl and even learned a few words of Italian from her. Mussolini was already the dictator and young people sang the patriotic songs of the Regime "Giovinezza, Giovinezza" (Youth, youth) – finishing with a tribute to "El Benito, Mussolini"

Tante Dita was a good governess in many ways, and she helped me to speak better German. She also tried to instill German ideas of discipline. "If you fall and graze your knee", she said "German parents will not soothe it, but rub salt in the wound to make it hurt more. That makes you tough." She was also

---

<sup>7</sup> Tante is German for Aunt

very critical of my parents. "If they really loved you, they would not go out to play bridge every night." In a way, she tried to steal my affection. After returning to Budapest, she started telling tales about my mother and Mr. Tombari, the Italian leader of the holiday party, making unfounded accusations about their relationship. Of course, she was immediately dismissed. At the time this made me quite sad, being too young to understand the seriousness of her gossip. In retrospect it was obviously the right decision. I began to love and respect my parents again.

-o0o-

During this period, father's fortunes were fluctuating. The Government enacted a new regulation outlawing dealings in foreign currency. Money became very tight because currency trading had been the mainstay of his business. He was heavily in debt. Clearly, there was no future for him in Hungary and he decided to emigrate. Going to Germany was not an option as Hitler was already in power. London was the logical choice, because one of his brothers, Eugene (Jancsi) was already in business there.

None of us knew English, so before leaving Hungary, we engaged a German lady, Tante (Aunt) Olli, to give us lessons. She was reputed to speak perfect English. We used a German textbook "*Englisch lernen ein Vergnügen*" - Learning English a Joy. Indeed, she was good! When she arrived for the lesson she said "good-bye". She was also careful about pronunciation. We had to practice words like water - pronounced "u-vatter"! When my father tried this out in London, the waitress brought him butter!

With his oldest brother Sándor, my father left for London on February 2, 1936, to set up homes for our two families. Our furniture in Budapest was auctioned to pay creditors. On June 25, 1936, Alma and my mother left with Elly, Vera, John and me for London. We traveled by overnight train to Ostende, crossed the English Channel and were met by Dad and our Uncle at Victoria station at the boat train terminal. For both families it was a happy reunion.

## CHAPTER 3

### A NEW COUNTRY

Our first home was in Hazlitt Road, West Kensington in London. Situated behind the Olympia Exhibition Hall, the street consisted of a long row of 2-3 story terrace houses. Number 10 was a boarding house, owned by an elderly lady, Mrs. White. As I remember, we had 2 bedrooms, dining room and kitchen on the 2nd floor. Olive, an Anglo-African girl in her 20's did the cleaning and maintenance of the house. She was very helpful and pleasant, and did her best to teach us some English. We used the German-English dictionary to search for words (there were none available for Hungarian - English). Useful as the dictionary was, it got us into trouble sometimes. One day, wishing to ask Olive whether she had settled the milkman's account, my mother looked up the word "settle". As a result of her search, she asked: "Did you execute the dairy man today?" Olive was understandably puzzled!

Meanwhile, my father tried to make a living by importing peaches and other fruit from Hungary. He used to go to the big fruit and vegetable market in Covent Garden to interest wholesale merchants in ordering shipments. Some of these were successful, but others were damaged on the train journey and not fit for sale. As he tried to check on sales every morning, he became known as the "most worried man in Covent Garden".

-o0o-

In December of that year, we listened to King Edward VIII speaking on the radio, announcing his "irrevocable decision" to abdicate from the throne, to pursue his love for Mrs. Simpson. Preparations were made for the coronation of the new king and decorations were hung in the streets of the West End. My parents took John and me to Regents Street to see the decorations. In the crowds, John and I were separated from our parents and knowing little English, had no idea how to find them. Eventually, we approached a friendly policeman, who took us to the Police Station and phoned our home. By this time, my parents were there and hurried back to retrieve us.

King George VI was crowned on May 12, 1937.

-o0o-

Our next-door neighbors were the Niebergs - a Jewish family. They had a son, Gerald, who was about my age and we became friends. We went together to Brook Green Synagogue for Sabbath services. Gerald attended the prestigious St. Paul's School, one of England's Public Schools<sup>8</sup>. My father would have dearly

---

<sup>8</sup> In England a "public school" is not run by the State. Public schools (such as Eton, Harrow, Marlborough, etc.) offer superior education with expensive tuition fees and are attended mostly by the children of the wealthy "upper class"

loved to send me there, but of course he could not afford the fees. We knew nothing about the British school system, but someone recommended West Kensington Central School for Boys. It was within walking distance, although it meant crossing busy High Street Kensington. Mr. Moss, the Deputy Headmaster interviewed me. As I could speak little English, he gave a written test of arithmetic and geometry questions. He was satisfied with the answers and I was admitted.

In a way, the choice of this school was fortunate. At that time in England, 3 types of State schools were available following the completion of elementary education. The best were 'Grammar Schools,' where education was comparable to the 'Public Schools'. Their graduates were prepared for entrance to University. Students from 'Secondary Schools' graduated at 14 or 15 to enter some kind of trade or apprenticeship. 'Central Schools' were intermediate between Grammar and Secondary Schools. After the first 2 years of basic education, students could choose either a commercial or technical stream. In addition to general subjects such as English, French, History and Science (no classics or Latin), technical students were taught woodwork, metal work and technical drawing. Students in the commercial stream learned shorthand, book keeping and typewriting. Most students left school to start work at age 15, but West Kensington Central School was exceptional. It offered an optional additional year for students to enter for the Cambridge School Certificate examination. This test qualified students for University entrance.

I entered the school in mid-year but my problems were not confined to academics or language. I told my classmates that I was a "h'ng'rian boy" - just as Tante Olly had taught me. In keeping with Hungarian fashion, I was dressed in Tyrolean shorts. Of course the boys took great delight in unbuttoning the flap that covered the fly. Nor did I know what one bully meant when he said, "I will knock your block off". Block?!

During the first few months I understood little of what the teachers said. They talked too fast and my vocabulary was deficient. The only one who spoke clearly, was Mr. Foy, the French teacher. (He was actually English and taught French with a strong London accent!) French was new to me and I was still struggling with English, but by the end of the school year I was top of the class in French with a score of 93%. Despite many hours spent on homework, my other grades were much lower. Interestingly, it was now difficult for me to speak German. In place of a German word, the English equivalent would come to mind

By summer 1937 we were able to move out of the boarding house to a "better neighborhood" in a two- storied rented house in Wright's Lane, a side street of Kensington High Street. Three big stores, Pontings, Barkers and Derry and Toms adjoined our street. To provide a source of income, my parents used the main living room as a bridge club. Clients would play bridge till the early

morning hours and my parents, acting as hosts, would fit into whichever game needed a foursome. The clients played for money and sometimes my parents won, sometimes they lost. To ease the burden of housework on my mother, we "imported" a Hungarian woman to cook and clean. Later, my grandmother, Noni came from Budapest and lived with us. Noni could be difficult and she did not relate well to my father.

I continued at West Kensington Central School, even though we now lived further away. I walked or took the bus to get there.

In 1938, Alma, Sándor's wife, my mother's sister, died. She had been suffering from heart and kidney trouble for a long time. Shortly after her death, Sándor married Helen Kindersley. They had 3 sons, named Robert, Geoffrey and Roger respectively.

-o0o-

Approaching the age of 13, I started thinking about a Bar Mitzvah. My parents neither encouraged nor discouraged this, but left me to make my own arrangements. I talked with one of the men at the Brook Green Synagogue. Mr. Mankin was a pious Jew and well versed in Jewish customs. He offered to tutor me without charge in preparation for the great day. I learned to read and chant the appointed lessons in Hebrew. One of them was from the Pentateuch (the Torah) the other from the prophets.

My Bar Mitzvah was on Christmas Day 1937. (This was the first Sabbath following my 13th birthday.) Wearing my yarmulke and talith (prayer shawl), I chanted the appointed readings. To this day I do not know what the actual passages were, as I did not understand a word of the Hebrew! The synagogue presented me with a large Hebrew-English Old Testament, which I treasure to this day.

At 13, a Jewish boy was considered to be a man, and responsible for his own sins. I tried to be a good Jew and began to use the Jewish prayer book, wearing the Talith and Tephillim (phylacteries) required for the recitation of the daily prayers. These were in Hebrew and my reading was laborious. Frustrated with words I did not understand, I gave this up after a while, though I did continue to attend Synagogue on the Sabbath. It was on the bus to the synagogue (not permitted on the Sabbath!) that I first came across the New Testament. One of the advertisements on the bus was from a Christian society, and exhibited the words of Jesus: "*For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.*"<sup>9</sup> It made good sense to me!

Mr. Mankin tried to persuade me to join a Jewish youth organization, but my father refused to allow this. He said: "I don't want you in an all-Jewish club but only one in which Jews and Christians can meet together". On Armistice Day

---

<sup>9</sup> Mark 8:36

in 1937, boys in our school were encouraged to wear the uniform of the organization to which they belonged. I thought the Scouts were the sharpest, particularly the 10th Fulham, which had a blue uniform with a white and blue scarf. Several from that Troop were in my class, and they invited me to come to the next Scout meeting. This time my father had no objections and I joined. Little did I know the profound effect Scouting was to have on my life.

Camping was always enjoyable and my first camp was perhaps the most memorable. It was the Scout Troop Whitsun Camp<sup>10</sup>. We camped in tents on open ground, at a site where wood and water were available. 6-8 boys slept in a tent, on ground sheets on the turf. Each boy was wrapped in two blankets, fastened with large blanket pins. My mother, as always, was very “vorrid” (her pronunciation of “worried”) about my going away, especially as she knew that we would cook our own meals. Before going, she taught me how to make goulash. My kit-bag was packed with everything I would need including cooking pots and cutlery. This was fine until we got off the truck and had to carry our bags on our shoulders. Mine was far too heavy and I dragged it behind me on the ground, tearing the cloth.

Of course we had no gas or electric stoves. We gathered wood and lit the fire (no more than 2 matches allowed!). Anyway, my goulash was a success and for a while I was nicknamed “Goulash” Later, my name was changed to “Oscar” and that stayed with me until I qualified as a doctor. To this day I don’t know why that name was chosen – perhaps because I was so obviously foreign.

At sunset a large bonfire was lit and we sat on logs, singing campfire songs. My English was still too weak to understand all the songs, especially as many of them employed real Cockney<sup>11</sup> expressions. They taught me one song – “Winkles” which I learned to sing with a Cockney accent. After that, no campfire would pass without my being asked to perform it!

In Scouts we learned many indoor and outdoor skills, such as camping, knotting, first aid and signaling with either Morse or Semaphore flags. The campsite had to be clean and tidy. Each morning the Leaders would inspect each Patrol’s site to check on personal cleanliness, the cooking utensils and the ground. No crumbs or litter was allowed. We learned the Scout Law and Promise which formed the moral and ethical basis of our membership. We respected our leaders and formed close bonds with each other.

---

<sup>10</sup> Whitsun is the British equivalent of Pentecost. It is a 3 day official holiday from Saturday to “Whit-Monday”

<sup>11</sup> Cockney is the description of the accent used in the London area and surroundings. It can also be used of a person from that part of England.

## CHAPTER 4

### WAR YEARS

In 1938, the international scene began to darken, when in March, Germany's Chancellor, Adolf Hitler annexed Austria. Later, in October, under the pretext of "Lebensraum" (living space), German troops occupied Sudetenland on the border of Czechoslovakia. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain traveled to Munich, met Hitler and agreed to this annexation having received a guarantee that Hitler had "no further territorial claims in Europe". On his return to England, Chamberlain gave his famous "Peace in our Time" speech. Winston Churchill repeatedly warned Parliament that Hitler could not be trusted. Unfortunately, he was largely ignored and labeled as a 'warmonger'. Nevertheless, war preparations had begun in Britain. Air raid wardens were trained, bomb shelters were prepared and gas masks were issued to the entire population. Plans were also made for evacuation of children from targeted cities.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. The evacuation of children began and trainloads of boys and girls (including my brother and me), carrying our bags and gas masks, were sent to various parts of the country. The Allies, Great Britain and France, issued an ultimatum to Hitler to withdraw his troops by 11 a.m. GMT on Sunday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was neither reply nor withdrawal. The Nation listened intently, as Prime Minister Chamberlain announced over the radio that Great Britain and France had declared war on Germany. Within minutes, air-raid sirens began to wail and people donned gas masks as they hurried to the shelters. Fortunately, it was a false alarm and soon we heard the siren sound the 'All-clear'.

*John and I with Rosemary Kelly*

West Kensington Central School was evacuated to Melksham, Wiltshire, in the West of England. John and I were billeted<sup>12</sup> with Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Kelly who had a 7-year-old daughter, Rosemary. They lived in an attractive detached house with car and garage. In those days only well-to-do people possessed cars. Mr. Kelly was an engineer and held a responsible position

John and I shared a bed in the guestroom. During the cold winter, we snuggled up to each other to keep warm! In accordance with British



---

<sup>12</sup> i.e. lodged. The Government gave a small allowance to the host family.

custom of the time, we were allowed to have one bath a week! Our hosts were kind and took good care of us – occasionally even taking us for a car ride. We did not appreciate how great a privilege that was (especially as gas was severely rationed) and we were scolded for not even offering to wash the car!

The Melksham School was not well equipped. Without laboratory facilities, we could no longer study physics and chemistry. Other subjects continued to be taught as before, because our teachers came with us from London. With improved understanding of English, my grades improved.

Due to blockade by enemy U-boats<sup>13</sup>, imports were cut to a minimum. Food was rationed. Everywhere, “Dig for Victory” was displayed on billboards. Our students’ contribution to the war effort was to grow potatoes on ‘allotments’<sup>14</sup>.

The local Scoutmaster, Mr. Day, started an evacuee section of the 1<sup>st</sup> Melksham Troop, so that we could wear our 10<sup>th</sup> Fulham uniforms. Eventually I rose to the rank of Patrol Leader. We held weekly “parades” (meetings in the Scout Hall) and on Saturday mornings, pulled a trek-cart around the neighborhood for collection of recyclable waste paper.

Communication with our parents was strictly by mail. Long distance telephone was too expensive, and of course, computers and E-mail were not even thought of! On the other hand, letters could be relied on to arrive by 8 a.m. the following morning. Most of our letters consisted of an account of how we spent our meager pocket money together with a request for more!

During the first Christmas holiday, without even informing our parents, John and I made arrangements with a long-distance transport firm to take us to London in a truck. We had no money for train fares. Imagine my parents’ surprise when late at night, we turned up at the door! Their first reaction after welcoming us was to run the bath! At the end of the holiday we returned to Melksham in the same truck.

After a few months, John was moved from the Kelly’s. His new hosts were very poor, the house was cold and had no bathroom<sup>15</sup>. I remember taking John to public baths for a scrub-down. Eventually, he was moved to a better home. Normally, we saw each other every day and shared our “comics” which contained all kinds of adventure stories. This worked until John (and later I also) got mumps. We were now isolated from each other and the only way we could communicate was to stand at opposite corners of a field. We used our knowledge of Semaphore to signal messages to each other. These included the latest developments in the stories we were reading in the “comics”

---

<sup>13</sup> submarines

<sup>14</sup> Strips of land allotted to volunteers for growing vegetables.

<sup>15</sup> i.e. a room with a bath-tub

By the spring of 1940, I was preparing for the Cambridge School Certificate. I enjoyed study and did well in most subjects. Unfortunately I was useless in sports, had poor posture, round shoulders and weak muscles. The other boys called me 'weed' or 'swot'<sup>16</sup>.

Living in an English home gave me a better appreciation of British attitudes to life and Scouting inspired me to live at a high ethical plane.

As the final school year progressed, I was faced with the question of my future. What career should I pursue? I wanted something that would be vocationally satisfying and be of service to others. My preferences were either for medicine or teaching. I knew that a doctor could make as much as £1,000 (about \$2000) a year! In December 1940, I passed the Cambridge School Certificate with distinctions<sup>17</sup> in French. Shorthand and Mathematics, credits in English Language and Literature, History, and Bookkeeping; I failed in Art! When it was time to leave, the Headmaster gave me a nice testimonial. He wrote: "Andrew...was placed first of our four boys who were successful in the whole examination. I feel sure that he would carry out the duties of a junior in a commercial firm or in the office of a local government authority in a creditable manner." So much for his opinion of my future prospects.

---

<sup>16</sup> nowadays known as a 'nerd'

<sup>17</sup> the grades were, distinction, credit, pass or fail, corresponding to A, B, C, and F

## CHAPTER 5

### GROWING UP

The war was escalating. In December 1940, while we were home for Christmas break, we endured the Fire Raid in London. The City was torched by incendiary bombs, but miraculously, in the midst of the blaze, St. Paul's Cathedral, escaped damage. My parents had already left Wright's Lane. Bombs damaged our temporary home in Notting Hill Gate and we moved to West Kensington Court. The bridge club closed and both my parents worked at Uncle Jancsi's restaurant, the 'Pop Inn' near Trafalgar Square in London,. After "graduating"<sup>18</sup> from West Kensington Central School, I returned to London in January 1941.

Blackout was strictly enforced. Night after night, the City was bombed with high explosives, which inflicted many casualties. Later, the Germans sent rockets. The earlier kind, unmanned radio controlled planes, were nicknamed "doodlebugs". They could be heard droning in the sky, until the engine suddenly cut out, signaling the explosion of the rocket that would follow in a moment. Later in the war, we were bombarded with the V2 rockets. These came over silently with barely a "whoosh" and exploded without warning. During these raids, many Londoners slept on the Underground station platforms. Noni and I slept in the designated shelter of West Kensington Court. The residents had to take turns fire watching. Carrying helmet and gas mask, the residents (including me) took shifts fire-watching on the roof, ready to extinguish firebombs using only a water bucket and stirrup pump.

-o0o-

After leaving school, my first employment was in a stock brokers' office in the City of London, where I earned the princely sum of 25 shillings (about \$3) a week. The job title was "junior clerk,"- a euphemism for "office boy". Most of the day was spent carrying documents to other offices in the financial district of the City of London. There was little responsibility and the job was boring. Three months later, Uncle Jancsi invited me to work as his 'secretary' in the Pop Inn for 30 shillings a week. I was persuaded to give an excuse to my employer, saying that I would be leaving in order to join my father in Evesham. He had a temporary job there, monitoring German radio broadcasts with the B.B.C.<sup>19</sup>. The story about my father was true, but I am ashamed to say that the excuse was completely false and not at all in keeping with scouting principles. At the Pop Inn, I kept accounts, typed menus and the letters dictated by my uncle. The skills learned at West Kensington Central School were becoming really useful.

---

<sup>18</sup> There was no formal graduation ceremony from Central School or other High Schools. Students just "left school"

<sup>19</sup> British Broadcasting Company

Before beginning medical education, I had to upgrade in physics, chemistry and biology – subjects that were not taught in Melksham. In the fall of 1941, I enrolled for these pre-medical subjects at Chelsea Polytechnic. The courses were interesting and challenging. At first, all the scientific terminology seemed overwhelming, but eventually I got used to it. At the same time I returned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Fulham Scout Troop, functioning as a Patrol Leader and later as a Rover Scout<sup>20</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> A Rover Scout is one who continues in the movement past the age of 18, but not necessarily a Scout leader.

## CHAPTER 6

### ENEMY ALIEN

In US history, December 7, 1941 is remembered for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On the same day in Europe, the nations of Hungary, Finland, Bulgaria and Romania joined the Axis<sup>21</sup> powers. As Hungarian nationals, we became "enemy aliens" overnight. Uncle Imre was interned immediately. Early the following morning, while we were still in bed, there was a knock on our door - it was the Police. "Here they come for poor Dad" I thought. But no, they were looking for poor Andrew Forbat! After getting dressed, I was ushered into a Police van, taken to the local Police Station for questioning and then, by train to a receiving center at the Exhibition Hall in Manchester. Finns, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Romanians were all held there until we were transported to the Internment Camp on the Isle of Man. The authorities converted local hotels to accommodate internees. Three adjoining hotels, surrounded by barbed wire, housed the Hungarians in what became known as RH Camp. We were treated well and allowed to send 2 censored letters per week.

I was easily the youngest member of the community - 3 weeks short of my 17th birthday. It was good to have Uncle Imre with me. Another Jewish boy, Peter Bernstein who was about 18 months my senior, befriended me. He appeared to be very knowledgeable and argued powerfully that all religion had been disproved by science. There was no need to believe in God, the Bible, Jewish traditions, or for that matter, traditional morality. I had no answers to his views.

Much of my time in the internment camp was spent writing applications for release on behalf of the other internees. My own case was also on my mind as I was missing valuable time at College. Finally, at the end of 51 days, I was released. Later I heard that Mr. Day, my Melksham Scoutmaster, had written to his Member of Parliament on my behalf. He vouched for my character and loyalty to the Allies (citing the waste-paper collection in the war effort). It was not too difficult to catch up with the course at the Polytechnic, and by June 1942, I passed the 1st M.B.<sup>22</sup>. - the first professional examination toward the degree in medicine.

Peter Bernstein's influence lasted a while after my return from the Isle of Man. I started to listen to and repeat dirty jokes. The majority of fellow students

---

<sup>21</sup> Germany and Italy

<sup>22</sup> In England, doctors get the University degree of M.B.,B.S – Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery. It is taken in 3 stages. First M.B. is in basic sciences (chemistry, physics and biology) taken at the end of the first year. Second M.B. is in pre-clinical subjects, such as anatomy, physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology. This part takes 5 terms. Final M.B.,B.S. follows 3 years of clinical subjects taken in a Hospital Medical School. M.B.,B.S. is equivalent to the M.D. degree in the U.S.

smoked and my own parents were also heavy smokers. I also began to smoke – cigarettes at first, later a pipe. That was really manly! Determined to master it, I persisted even when it made me sick. Yet, after a few more weeks, this thought came to me: "Andrew, you are a fool! So many smokers are trying, unsuccessfully, to stop and you are trying to take up this habit even though you don't enjoy it!" At that point, I quit smoking for ever!

Sheila Christian from my class became my first girl friend. Scouting principles kept me from immorality in this relationship. There were also long discussions with several male students. Scouting continued to be important in my life. Several evenings a week I was out, helping the other leaders, before returning to study in our apartment. I would also go to weekend camps with the Scouts, but by this time it was necessary to report to the Police before leaving and after returning home. No matter how patriotic my feelings were toward Britain, I was still an enemy alien!

-o0o-

For a while, I continued as a 'freethinker'. However, the scientific courses at the Polytechnic gave me food for thought. The lecturers did not profess to be religious and evolution was taught as an accepted dogma. Yet, the world seemed to be orderly, bearing every mark of design rather than random accident. Why was the greatest density of water at 4°C, causing ice to float on top and ensuring that fish would survive? How come, that the elements differed from each other by one electron orbiting a nucleus? At the time, only 90 elements had been identified, but it was possible to point to the gaps where new elements were waiting to be discovered. Surely, a Mathematician designed this! Then, there was the chicken embryo. We were taught that if the lens primordium <sup>23</sup> were implanted into the chicken embryo's thigh, then an optic cup would form there. Obviously, it was a chemical response - but Who placed the chemical there?

---

<sup>23</sup>rudimentary lens of the chicken embryo

## CHAPTER 7

### LIFE CHANGING CONFRONTATION

As the course progressed plans had to be made to continue studies in human anatomy and physiology in one of the Colleges of the University of London. Finance was a real problem and most scholarships were restricted to British Citizens. I applied at Guy's Hospital Medical School<sup>24</sup> and after a written competition, I was one of 12 students selected for interview. Despite being told that all 12 would be accepted, my application for admission was rejected. No reason was given, but my nationality was probably a factor. Mr. Henschel, our biology lecturer at the Polytechnic, advised me to apply at University College London. This time I was successful. University College had a good reputation for research and academics. It also prided itself as the only College in London University which had no Faculty of Theology!

During the summer break I worked again at the Pop Inn. My Uncle Jancsi paid the £50 tuition fee required by the University, enabling me to start the pre-clinical part of the medical degree course in September. It was a time of heavy air-raids in London and the Medical Faculty was evacuated to a property at Fetcham - a little village about 20 miles South-West of London. Temporary huts were set up as dissecting rooms and laboratories for the teaching of Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology and Biochemistry.

-o0o-

Most students found lodgings in local homes around the College. As that was relatively expensive, it was decided that I should travel to Fetcham by suburban train each day. Admittedly, this meant getting up earlier and spending more time traveling, but at least the time could be used in reading textbooks on the journey. Traveling by the Underground (Subway) from West Kensington to Wimbledon, I caught the suburban train to Leatherhead. From there, it was a 20-minute walk to the College. Several other students chose to go by train. One of them was Derrick Rose, who got on the same train at Raynes Park. There, I used to stick my head out of the window and he would run to join me in the compartment. We soon became good friends.

In many ways, Derrick was different from the other students. He did not smoke, use bad language or tell dirty jokes. He was cheerful, conscientious and scrupulously honest. One day, he showed his round-trip ticket to the guard at the station, pointing out that it was the wrong leg of the trip and insisted on paying the fare. I would not have done that! He was a good student and very kind. One day during a lecture, my fountain-pen ran dry (before the days of ball-points). I whispered, asking him for a pencil. Pushing his pen into my hand,

---

<sup>24</sup> One of the several University Hospitals in London University

he took notes with a pencil. We used to go to a "British Restaurant" for lunch. These were established to provide a cheap meal for workers during the rationing period. As adolescents we were always hungry, but Derrick would place a couple of his potatoes on to my plate.

The thought came to me that this man kept the Scout Law better than I did. He would be a splendid Scout leader, but did he believe in God? Or, was he an atheist like most medical students? I felt that he would be a fine example to growing boys. One day, on our walk from the rail station to the College, I plucked up courage and said "You know, I think if you want to be happy, you have to try to make others happy."

Derrick agreed. The conversation was starting well. Then it was his turn. "Yes, but where does it get you?"

"Well, it would give you a happy, satisfying life"

"But where does it get you with God?" (Who was talking about God now?) This was a new idea – but at the age of 18, I thought I must have an answer to every question! "God will no doubt reward you if you do good deeds"

"That is not what the Bible teaches" said Derrick. He does not tell us "to do our best to obey the Scout Law". He gave us the Ten Commandments and they go: 'Thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not'"

"According to that we are all in trouble" said I. "None of us keep the Commandments perfectly. Does that mean we all go to Hell?"

"It would" he replied. "It would, except that God loves us so much, that He sent his Son Jesus into the world to die for our sins. He took the punishment we deserve so that we can be forgiven."

This was the first time in my life that I had heard the Gospel. Before that day, no-one had told me why Jesus came into the world. At night, I wrote in my journal: "What he says is logical, but of course, as a Jew I cannot believe it"

During the next few months we had many discussions and I had a lot of questions. Is the Bible true? Can we believe in miracles? How do we know that Jesus rose from the dead? Is it not better to be a good Jew than a bad Christian? What about all the bad things that were done to Jews by Christians. To help me with these intellectual questions, Derrick gave me a couple of books – one of them "Why Believe" was by Professor Rendle Short of the University of Bristol, where he was Professor of Surgery and of Physiology. These books convinced me that there was no good intellectual reason for rejecting the Gospel.

At the synagogue where I had had my Bar-Mitzvah, I asked whether Jews believed the divine inspiration of the Scriptures i.e. the Old Testament. The answer was affirmative. Another problem was the issue of family identity. Our family had always been Jewish– was I to break centuries of tradition? What

would my parents say? I remembered how many in Hungary had become Catholics just to get a better position in life. Would that accusation be leveled against me? I asked my Scoutmaster, who was a regular churchgoer, though hardly an evangelical Christian. He thought it best to stick with the religion into which one was born.

I was conscious that I was not living up even to the standards of the Scout Law – far less God's Law. I began to pray "O God, if you are there, show me which way to go – whether to be a more observant Jew or to become a Christian. I promise to do whatever You show me."

At the end of the summer term, Derrick challenged me to read the first 8 chapters of the book of Romans. Not possessing a New Testament, I went to the local stationers to buy a Bible. I chose the cheapest, one without marginal references, and read those chapters. Much of it was hard to understand, but there was a wonderful quality in these writings. Perhaps I would understand Romans better if I knew what was in the Gospels, so I began to read the Gospel of Matthew.

It is hard for people brought up even in a nominal Christian culture to realize the impact of the life and teachings of Jesus on someone who had never been exposed to them. So, it was Jesus who talked about "wolves in sheep's clothing". I loved what he said about those who cling to the externals, ("the outside of the platter") but leave out internal sincerity and truth. He had a sense of humor – "camels through the eye of the needle" and "whited sepulchers"? Then, I was amazed how Jesus replied when challenged about paying taxes to Caesar by those who were trying to trap him: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God which are God's". Brilliant!! Jesus was wonderful.

One night, as I was struggling against the temptation of impurity, in my helplessness I prayed: "Jesus, you help me". This was the first time in my life that I had used his name as a prayer. Immediately, the temptation left me. This was a completely new experience. Something wonderful happened – I now believed in Jesus. At the end of September, 1943, at the age of 18 years and 9 months, I was born again.

What about family? No-one should ever know of my new faith! So, when the following term started, walking with Derrick, I was still arguing against him! Somewhat exasperated, he said: "Andrew, I cannot do any more for you. I have told you what you need to do, I have tried to persuade you, I have prayed for you. If you still reject Christ, the responsibility is entirely yours." We were approaching the railway station and I had a tremendous urge to tell him. So I said: "Well, Derrick, I don't think our friendship has been wasted."

"I hope not" said Derrick nonchalantly.



Derrick Rose – deep in study

“Something else has not been wasted – your prayers for me”

At this point, he understood what I was trying to convey. He smiled broadly as we got on the train and we both experienced the joy of the Lord. When he got off the train before I reached my destination, I could not help but sing. Not yet knowing any Christian hymns or songs I hummed “Johnny got a Zero” (a currently popular song referring to a Japanese plane) all the way home. I had not only believed in my heart but confessed with my mouth that Jesus was in my life. (Rom. 10:9-10)

Notwithstanding my decision to be a secret believer, I immediately joined the meetings of the Christian Union. There were only a few of us, but we had great times in prayer and Bible Study. My thirst for the Bible was insatiable. I had finished Matthew’s Gospel before trusting Christ. I thought that anything after that would be an anticlimax. (My conversion took place between Matthew and Mark!) Instead, each Gospel was more and more wonderful. When I got to John’s Gospel, it seemed as if Heaven was opened. Would Acts be boring in comparison? Not a bit! It was really exciting to see how God worked in the early Church. Not wanting to be seen reading a Bible at home, I read it on the train on the way to College and anywhere else where I could be private.

Derrick used to invite me to his home on Sundays. His mother was a kindly Scottish lady, who would give us “high tea”, which included a boiled egg. (During rationing, eggs were really precious. The ration was only 1 per week, unless one had a stomach ulcer. My father was therefore allowed 3 eggs and my mother used our share to supplement his breakfast for the rest of the week.) After tea, we used to go to the evening service at their church – the Gospel Hall, with a group popularly known as Plymouth Brethren<sup>25</sup>. Their simple style of

---

<sup>25</sup> This group is orthodox in Christian doctrine, but the form of worship is different. The morning service is a communion service, where any “brother” can lead, pray, break bread and give message of encouragement

worship and deep knowledge of the Scriptures appealed to me. On the Sunday of the month, when our Scout Troop attended "church parade" I would now join them, even though the "High Church" service did not appeal to me.

-o0o-

My parents noticed the change in my interests and activities and one day my mother asked me what I believed. It was clear that I could keep my secret no longer. When I told my parents that I believed in Jesus, they exploded. "How can a Jew believe in Jesus? How can you, a medical student, believe in the virgin birth? Don't you realize what Christians have done to Jews? What about Hitler and the concentration camps?" After that, we would have arguments from time to time, with varying degrees of anger on their part. Traditionally, a son who converts to Christianity in an orthodox Jewish home is disowned and sometimes a funeral ceremony is held as though he were dead. My parents, however, were never orthodox, and the family tie was more important to them than my religious views. They (and the rest of the family) decided that this was just similar to the sort of "religious mania" that I had at the time of my Bar Mitzvah and would no doubt be over in 3 months! (This is being written 63 years later!)

It was sad, that my parents could never understand that not all European Gentiles were Christians. This was partly due to the fact that someone born a Jew would always be a Jew. By analogy, someone born a "Christian" was a Christian, irrespective of his lifestyle. This was reinforced by the Catholic practice of infant baptism in Hungary and other countries, whereby the child would be considered a Christian simply by virtue of his baptism.

Over the next few years, my faith grew. The Christian Union at College was affiliated to the Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship branch in London, known as L.I.F.C.U. - London Inter-Faculty Christian Union. Evangelistic services were held in various churches in Central London. Some of the finest preachers (of various denominations) called students to Christ. There were also evangelistic campaigns led by Tom Rees at the Central Hall, Westminster, where thousands of young people heard the Gospel and many received Christ

I attended various churches, including St. Matthew's in Fulham, (SW London), where the Bible was faithfully taught. There, I met a couple of young men, David Owen and John Enstone, who introduced me to the Fulham YMCA. This functioned as a low cost hostel for young men. It was run by the warden, Robert Maltby and his wife Evelyn. This YMCA was not linked with the central organization, which had, on the whole given up on evangelism. In Fulham, the Gospel message was proclaimed regularly. Each Sunday evening, after church, we had a service, at which Rob Maltby or one of the young men gave the

---

or exhortation at the end. There is no set order of service. The evening service is evangelistic and follows a standard form of hymns, reading, prayer and sermon. The Plymouth Brethren take Scripture as their divinely inspired authority.

message. We went out into the street “fishing”, asking people to come inside for the meeting. From time to time, I also was asked to speak and this gave me the first experience of public Bible preaching.

The story of my conversion was unusual enough for Christian groups to want to hear it and I was invited to various meetings and churches to give my testimony. In the Scouts I tried to witness to the boys and fellow Scout leaders. Sad to say, my family and particularly my brother John would have nothing to do with faith in Jesus. Notwithstanding, our relations with our parents and each other continued to be loving and good.

-o0o-



John and I with our parents at their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 5-5-1946

By now, my parents were fluent in English (although when we argued, they spoke in Hungarian. John and I replied in English and we understood each other perfectly). However, they had great difficulty pronouncing the “th” and “w” sounds. John had returned from Melksham to go to Sloane School (a grammar school) and later, studied engineering. During this period, John came home one day, saying he heard something funny. At Wimbledon station, he heard the announcer (who must have been German) say on the loudspeaker: “Zis is Vimblon, Vimblon station. Zee next train vill go Valton, Veybridge, Vest Veybridge and Voking.” My mother did not seem to get the point and asked John to repeat the story. With perfect innocence she replied: “So Vot?” Of course, John and I broke up – she still could not see the joke.

-o0o-

In April 1944, I passed the second professional examination (2nd M.B.), and began clinical studies at University College Hospital in London. Some of the departments were evacuated to peripheral locations, but most of the work was done at the main hospital. For me, this was really convenient, as at this time we were living near Russell Square, only 10 minutes’ walk from the Hospital.

Our few Christians decided to continue to meet, but did not have a

suitable venue. After making enquiries, we were informed that the Hospital Chapel was available. In the underground corridors of the hospital, we found what seemed to be the right place and began having Bible Study and prayer there – until one day, we found a corpse lying on the central table in the room. We had actually been meeting in the mortuary chapel! Undeterred, we prayed around the corpse that day, but eventually found the real Hospital Chapel.

Before Christmas 1945, Derrick suggested that we should hold Christmas services in some of the hospital wards. The Hospital Chaplain gave permission, and we arranged to go to 3 of the wards. (Hospital patients in England are in wards of 20-24 beds; privacy is obtained only by drawing curtains around the bed.)

At that time, on my obstetric rotation, I mentioned our plans to the ward Sister (Head Nurse). She requested that we should hold a service in the gynecology ward also. Derrick did not think we could do 4 services, but the Sister prevailed on us and a service was held there also. The following morning I found that the patient allocated to me had been discharged. The lady in the adjoining bed called me over and asked whether we belonged to some sect. I explained who we were and she remarked that it was great that students should care sufficiently to come and hold a service for the patients. She told me her story. Following the delivery of her first child, she had a severe hemorrhage and now she was in the hospital for treatment of infertility. The Professor of Obstetrics had given her little hope of any future pregnancy. We had many conversations in the ensuing days and continued to meet after her discharge from hospital. She put her trust in Christ and the sequel was that her prayers were wonderfully answered. She conceived and gave birth to a baby girl, Mary.

After that Christmas, the students led weekly ward services in 3 wards (rotating in different wards weekly) every Sunday afternoon. This became a tradition that continued for several years.

-o0o-

In the summer of 1944, I was invited to work as an officer in a Christian harvest camp with Inter Schools Camps, a branch of the ministry of Scripture Union. I already had quite a lot of experience in boys' camps in the Scouts, but this was different. Instead of tents, we rented a boarding school during the summer vacation. Because of the shortage of men during the war, high school and college students helped to gather the harvest. After breakfast, we all went to work in the fields. Each evening the Gospel was presented to the boys. The meetings were led by the Commandant, Ken Senior, a teacher at one of the British "Public Schools", but the other officers were invited to take turns in giving the talk. At bedtime, devotions were led by the officer who was in charge of 6 or 7 boys of each dormitory. We did not influence the boys to join any particular church, but concentrated on the teachings of the Bible As a medical

student, they called me by the honorary title of “Docco”. Even after graduating in medicine, I continued with these camps, until the Army called me up for National Service in 1950. These and similar camps, had a powerful influence in the Christian Church. Many of the boys who found Christ became Christian leaders. Some became Pastors in various denominations; others went to serve on the mission field. One year, Robert and Geoffrey, Uncle Sándor’s older sons were among the boys who attended.

-o0o-

During the year, I continued to work in the Scout Troop. In this connection, I was appointed to represent Fulham Scouts at the Fulham Youth Congress. This was an advisory committee to the Youth Council of the Borough of Fulham, which sought the input of Youth Club members. Several youth organizations were represented. One of the delegates was a girl from St. John’s Ambulance Brigade. Mary Turner was not only pretty, but also had a very beautiful singing voice. I introduced her to my brother John and they quickly teamed up. Several years later, I was best man at their wedding on August 29, 1953.

With church, Christian Union, Scouts, YMCA, Inter School Camps, ward services, and speaking at various meetings, when did I have time to study medicine? Good question! Actually, I learned more by listening and watching than by reading. I was conscientious in attending all lectures, ward rounds, demonstrations, post-mortems<sup>26</sup> and managed to get good marks. In fact, in a competitive exam, I received the Liston Gold Medal for surgery. At the final examination in October 1946, 2 months before my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, I passed at the first attempt. I was now a doctor, with the degree of M.B.,B.S. (Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery), the British equivalent of an M.D. in the States.

---

<sup>26</sup> autopsies

## CHAPTER 8

### THE YOUNG DOCTOR

Internship<sup>27</sup> was not compulsory for new medical graduates, although most of us sought one (as House Physician or House Surgeon), preferably in our alma mater. These appointments were for 6 months only and at the end of each job, a new application was necessary in competition against other applicants.

It was this process that taught me more of the Lord's faithfulness and provision. I was by-passed for several advertised posts at University College Hospital. Then I was asked to do a locum<sup>28</sup> for 2 weeks in the Casualty Department<sup>29</sup> at the National Temperance Hospital. Even during that short period, I started a Bible Study group among the nurses! My father said that if he had been my boss, he would have fired me on the spot!

Then, another invitation came for a locum job as Orthopaedic and Ear Nose and Throat House Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital – a teaching hospital. It was only for 2 months, but I was thankful for the opportunity.

I was already scheduled to be baptized as a believer on January 16, 1947, the day after that job started. (Of course, with my Jewish background, I had not been baptized as a baby.) This step had been coming up for some time. It was a difficult decision for me, because I did not want my family to think that I was doing it for material gain. However, by now it was clear to everyone that I was not only a believer, but an active Christian. Mrs. Maltby, at the YMCA, challenged me with John 14:15: "If you love me, keep my commandments." I knew I loved Jesus. The baptism (by immersion) took place in a Brethren Gospel Hall in Fulham. My parents refused to attend, but several of my friends and some relatives were there as I gave my testimony before the congregation.

Soon after starting work at Charing Cross Hospital, I attended a Nurses' Christian Fellowship meeting. We chatted, sang some hymns and waited for the speaker to arrive. After a while, the nurse in charge of the group turned to me and asked: "Can you speak after this hymn?" A day or so previously, I had read a passage in John's Gospel, concerning the trial of the Lord Jesus before Pilate. When Pilate asked "Shall I crucify your King?" the chief priests replied "We have no king but Caesar." That verse spoke powerfully to me and I shared its message with the nurses. The next morning, it seemed that every nurse in the hospital knew that I was a Christian! There were many opportunities to share the Gospel

---

<sup>27</sup> A new doctor would serve as a House Physician (in internal medicine) or House Surgeon. These posts were for 6 months and correspond to Internship in the States. The progression (if a specialty was chosen) would be Senior House Surgeon, Registrar, Senior Registrar and eventually after completion of training, a Consultant.

<sup>28</sup> Locum tenens – to hold the place of, i.e. substitute for one on temporary absence.

<sup>29</sup> Emergency Room

among doctors and medical students during my two months there.

-o0o-

Dr. Lee and his wife, both doctors, were bridge partners of my parents. They were planning to go on vacation for 2 months and asked me to run their practice in the East End of London. The patients were mostly uneducated and very poor. The doctors' office (called the surgery) consisted of one room in their house. It was used for consultation and examination of patients. In addition, there was a waiting room and a store-room for medications. There was no secretary, nurse, receptionist, laboratory, appointment system or even a room for changing clothes. We held "surgeries<sup>30</sup>" in the morning and evening and made house calls during the day – or in cases of emergency, at night. Most of the cases were fairly straight-forward. Patients needing laboratory investigations of the simplest kind had to be referred to one of the local hospitals



The young doctor

One old man came for a fill-up of his cough medicine. Following my training, I said I wanted to examine him. He opened a button on his shirt under his jacket. "No," I said. "You must strip to the waist." He said: "The other doctor does it like this." That was embarrassing. Not wishing to suggest that the other doctor was not thorough, I said: "The other doctor is older and more experienced than I am." He can hear through your clothes – I can't". No sooner had I said this, I regretted it. None of our patients' homes had central heating and the only defense against cold was to dress in multiple layers. He began stripping off his coat, vest, under-shirt, a pullover, a shirt, another pullover, another under-shirt ... until at last, he was ready for examination. Then, he took a long time for dressing, while patients outside were waiting. What a difference the local situation can make to medical practice!

---

<sup>30</sup> office hours

Two internships followed. One of these was at a branch of Charing Cross Hospital, where I worked mostly with the gynecologists. The second was in a small hospital in Battersea, South London, where among other things, I learned how to do adeno-tonsillectomies (T's and A's) on children. The National Health Service in England was signed into law and made operational on July 5, 1948 during this period.

-o0o-

Board and lodging was provided to young doctors, but the pay was minimal! I wanted to go to a V.P.S.<sup>31</sup> winter Christian House Party in Switzerland, but could not afford it. Just then, a 2-week locum in a Christian doctor's practice in Kent was offered and provided me with the needed funds. On the return journey, I stopped down in Paris. I was alone, and went to eat in a restaurant. The waiter asked what I wanted to drink and I asked for lemonade. He was horrified. "Limonade?! Monsieur, vous êtes un homme!" (Sir, you are a man!)

In the New Year of 1949 an opportunity arose to serve at the Islington Medical Center in North London. This was a general practice, associated with a local Christian Mission. There was no car and I had to do all home visits on a bicycle. The Mission also ran a youth club, but the teenagers in it were much more resistant to the Gospel than the boys I knew in the camps I had worked in. For those young people, the only goal was "to have a good time" - "Surely Jesus would want us to enjoy ourselves". There was little thought of planning for the future - tomorrow was sufficiently far ahead.

While working in Islington, George O'Brien, one of our Fulham Scouts to whom I had previously given Scripture Union notes, visited me. As we talked about spiritual things and salvation, he humbly received Jesus as his Savior. He became a beloved friend, who continued to grow in faith. He was active with the Fulham YMCA group and was later ordained in the Church of England, serving as a Parish priest till he retired. He then became a hospital chaplain. Our friendship remains strong to this day.

-o0o-

By now, I was the Commandant ("Commy") of our Inter Schools Camp. After the summer camp concluded, I felt the need for further hospital training. Hoping to specialize as an internist, I applied for a post in a big hospital. Jobs in internal medicine were scarce, because many young doctors, who had returned from serving in the Armed Forces, needed such appointments and were usually given priority. No reply came for several weeks and I telephoned the hospital to see if there was any hope of success. They said that my application was in hand and told me to wait a little longer. To my surprise, they called me back about an

---

<sup>31</sup> Varsity and Public Schools Camp - branch of the same organization as Inter Schools camps

hour later, offering me a different job in a smaller hospital in the same area. The difference was that my main duties would be in anesthesia, although medical patients would also be under my care.

My initial reaction was that my interest was not in anesthesia, but in internal medicine. "Why don't you go and take a look, doctor. If you take this post, we promise to give you the job you applied for at the end of your 6 months." It was obvious that they were anxious for me to take this appointment, so a little bargaining was in order! This was September and I asked for a promise of a 2 weeks vacation to enable me to run the Easter house-party for Inter Schools Camps the following year. They were glad to do this and believing this to be the Lord's guidance, I accepted the job.

Nelson Hospital was small, run partly by family practitioners. An anesthesiologist came several times a week to work with surgeons, but I was left on my own much of the time. There was no formal teaching, but we discussed cases around the operating table. It took me a while to acquire the skills of venipuncture and tracheal intubation, but eventually, despite some very scary moments, I became proficient and began to enjoy anesthesiology. It was much more interesting than I had imagined. By today's standards, anesthesia practice was rather relaxed in Britain – one might say, sloppy. Anesthesia records were not kept. Patients were monitored more by appearance than by measurement of blood pressure and pulse. EKG monitoring was not even available. Intravenous drips were only set up for big cases – and then, only when it became necessary. Looking back, it makes me wonder, how anyone survived – but most patients did. This was a tribute more to the wonderful design and strength of the human body than to our skill and knowledge.

We had pleasant quarters, where for the first time, we had a television set. Its screen was very small and the picture was black and white – but still very much a novelty back in 1949. The time at Nelson Hospital was all the more enjoyable, because another Christian doctor (trained at my teaching hospital) was doing an internship and we were able to pray together. A friendship developed with a young radiographer, Len Taylor, who stated categorically, that he was an atheist. We talked about this several times.

One day, I took off my fancy watch and proposed a theory – namely, that my watch was not made by an intelligent craftsman, but that its components were shaken up in a bag and they came together randomly. He saw the point! Soon after that, he became a Christian and continued to serve faithfully in his church until he passed away in April 2006.

## CHAPTER 9

### MILITARY SERVICE

Most young men of my age were called up for military service during, and in the years following the Second World War. Naturalization applications had been suspended while the war was in progress. Immediately after VJ (Victory over Japan) Day, I submitted my application and received my certificate of Naturalization on December 11, 1947. This conferred not only the privileges but also the responsibilities of a natural born British Citizen. The call-up notice from the War Office came while working at the Nelson Hospital and it was arranged that I should report for military duty following the summer Inter Schools Camp. As a physician, I was given an immediate commission as Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.)

On October 1, 1950 I reported at the R.A.M.C. Depot in Crookham, a few miles from Aldershot, where the main military garrisons were situated. Earlier, at a Scripture Union Rally, Leith Samuel, a British evangelist reminded me that the Apostle Paul, while incarcerated in a Roman prison for 2 years, wrote: "*the things which happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.*" (Phil. 1:12). Therefore, I also should use my 2 years' National Service for the same goal. Even before reporting for duty, I contacted the Officers' Christian Union and S.A.S.R.A.<sup>32</sup>

Officers had 12 weeks of basic training, though this was not quite as rigorous as 'boot camp'. We learned to march and salute properly and were taught our responsibilities and duties as officers. Lectures were given on tropical medicine, and military hygiene. Instead of living in Army barracks, we were coupled with another officer. Loss of privacy made it difficult to kneel to pray and read the Bible in a 'Quiet Time'. Despite this, following the advice of the Christian organizations ministering to soldiers, we were to establish our identity as Christians in this way. It was certainly a help when faced with men who drank heavily and used foul 'Army language'. They did not expect that practicing Christians would imitate their lifestyle! Whenever we were off duty, I went to Aldershot to join in OCU<sup>33</sup> or SASRA meetings and had several opportunities to speak to the men.

-o0o-

As our basic training was about to conclude, we received a questionnaire regarding our preferences for deployment. My first preference was for a home posting, because I hoped to continue serving in churches and Christian meetings and also to be near family. My second choice was for Germany, as I was fairly fluent in German. However, the Army's ways were not my ways and in

---

<sup>32</sup> Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association

<sup>33</sup> Officers' Christian Union

accordance with military logic, I was posted to the Canal Zone of Egypt, a British Protectorate in the area surrounding the Suez Canal.

After traveling overland across Europe, we proceeded by boat from Trieste to Port Said. During the sea journey, I spotted a young second lieutenant who appeared to be lonely and I tried to befriend him. He was a quiet fellow. As we chatted, he told me that his father was a surgeon in London. We had some spiritual discussions and I learned that David Payne had been brought up Anglican, but had no knowledge or experience of salvation. After arrival in Egypt, he was posted to Tel-el Kebir, (TEK) but came to visit me in Fayid, where I was stationed. On that occasion, I challenged him about the need to take a step of faith to receive Christ. At first he did not see the need for this, until I said that if ever a girl he loved came into his life, he would have to propose to her and "invite her into his life" before he could experience married happiness. In the same way, he needed to ask Jesus to come into his life to receive the gift of salvation. A few days later, he wrote that he had asked Jesus to be his Savior.

There was a branch of the Mission to Mediterranean Garrisons (MMG) in Fayid. The canteen, where soldiers could relax, was run by 3 dedicated ladies, who invited the servicemen to meetings where the Gospel was presented. Many of the young soldiers and airmen found Christ there. For me, it was a place of fellowship and opportunity of service

My duties were at the British Military Hospital in Fayid, where the officer in charge of anesthesia was Major Sugden. He had a strong belief that ether anesthesia was the only safe method and would not allow the use of muscle relaxants. I felt that we were asked to regress from the advances that had been made in anesthesia..

-o0o-

After a few weeks in Fayid, I was transferred to the hospital in Tel-el Kebir, the Western outpost of the Canal Zone, well away from the Suez Canal. This was undoubtedly the most disliked posting in the region. The Garrison consisted of huts, used for barracks and offices. The scene was a monotony of sand and barbed wire. The main garrison in TEK had most of the fighting and engineering units. Apart from a cinema in the main garrison, there were no facilities for entertainment and morale was generally low. The hospital, where I was posted, was 3 miles further inland on the border with Egypt proper.

Lt. Col. Harman, the Commanding Officer greeted me on arrival. He was a pleasant, mustached man, with a curious way of speaking - he raised the pitch of his voice at the end of each sentence. "The Padre has been looking for you....they say that you are some kind of a preacher. Hmmm! We had better watch our talk in front of you!" Apparently David Payne had spoken to the chaplain (Padre Laing) about me and my reputation preceded me.

My posting to the hospital was to give anesthetics, but at that time there was little need for surgery in the unit. Consequently, they put me in charge of "casualty" (emergency room) and also made me fire officer and hygiene officer. Soon, I was asked to keep accounts of drinks consumed and paid for in the officers' mess. They could trust me as I did not drink! Education at West Kensington Central School in book-keeping made this easy. The same could not be said about fire and hygiene, of which I lacked even a rudimentary knowledge.



Andrew as Army Officer in Tel-el-Kebir

With so much free time one would have thought that I could read and study. However, in the hot, arid desert, I had little inclination or energy for this. Eventually, I did start reading anesthesia journals and asked my parents to send some of my textbooks. I also subscribed to a correspondence course to help me prepare for the Diploma in Anesthesia

Because of the general atmosphere of boredom and low morale, I felt that something needed to be done for the Troops. We started, what was going to be a recreational club, with a Christian objective. Lacking in experience, I thought I could pattern it on Scouts or Inter Schools Camps. Each Wednesday evening there was to be a period of recreation, followed by hymns, choruses and a short message. The men wanted to organize dancing, but in those days I did not think this was compatible with a Christian goal. The recreational side gradually faded out, but the meetings continued until I was demobilized. The Padre authorized me to conduct Sunday services each week. He came only once a month to conduct a Communion service.

David Payne in the main Garrison visited regularly. We studied the Bible together. Soon, another young officer, Henry Green joined us. He had seen the change in David's life and also became a Christian. Several soldiers on the hospital compound became personal friends through the fellowship. This was not approved by the senior officers. Fraternization with "other ranks" was

frowned on. I (perhaps foolishly) ignored their warnings wanting to be a “nice guy” and to avoid any appearance of snobbery.

-o0o-

In July 1952 there was a coup in Egypt. King Farouk was deposed and General Neguib became President. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was abrogated and we were beginning to experience shootings and skirmishes around the periphery of the camp. Casualties (both British and Egyptian) were brought to the hospital for surgery. All officers were required to carry pistols outside the camp. (I never fired a live bullet, even for practice!) Soon, the hospital was moved into the main TEK garrison for protection. We designed a new set-up and operating room. Leave was canceled and I was unable to go on a previously planned trip to Cyprus.

I was ordered to return to Fayid for a period of further training. Just before leaving, one of the medical orderlies, Steve Mugglestone, asked me for a Bible. I gave him one and inscribed it: from: “Andrew Forbat, B.A. (John 3:3) S.B.G. (Eph 2:8).” When I returned a few weeks later, he was curious about these letters and numbers. This gave the opportunity to tell him about being Born Again and Saved by Grace. He accepted Christ as his Savior.

Some weeks later, another orderly reported that during night duty Steve had failed to give the prescribed midnight dose of penicillin to a patient suffering from burns. (Penicillin had to be given 4 hourly by injection). He was charged with disobeying the order of an officer and had to face court martial. This seemed to be an excessive charge and I offered to be his defending officer.

It was clear that Steve had neglected his duty, but he had not defied a command. On praying about it, I was led to Proverbs 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* I advised him to plead guilty. On the day of the trial, I prepared a statement to mitigate the gravity of the offence and began by saying that he was not fully trained and that he was not supervised.

The judge interrupted me, saying that my statement constituted a defense. Steve had to plead “not guilty”. Now the prosecution witnesses had to be cross-examined. The surgeon who brought the charge claimed that because of Steve’s neglect, the patient’s burn became infected. I asked whether it was true that the medical article describing this treatment mandated a filtered private room. He had to admit that this was so. So, it could not be proved that the failure to give the injection was the sole cause of sepsis. The nursing officer on duty claimed that she had supervised the orderlies, but other orderlies gave evidence that in fact she had only been seen once that night. The patient himself was not sure whether or not he had received the shot. Finally, the orderly who found that there was one dose of penicillin more than could be accounted for, refused to take an oath before giving evidence, because it was “against his religious

principles". So, the case against Steve melted away. He was found not guilty, the charge was dropped and he was released. This was a wonderful answer to prayer – but the other officers were annoyed that I had supported a "private soldier" against my fellow-officers. Steve was transferred to Fayid the very same day.

Demobilization was not too far away. By now, I was counting the days before leaving TEK. I was flown home in September 1952.

## CHAPTER 10

### PURSUING A CAREER

I lost no time in applying for jobs in anesthesia as a “registrar” (equivalent of a resident physician in training) and was appointed to St. James’ Balham, in South London. This was a large hospital, with a very busy surgical service. Apart from neuro- and thoracic surgery, all specialties were represented. The senior surgeon, Mr. Norman Tanner<sup>34</sup>, had an international reputation in gastric surgery. He would perform 3-4 gastrectomies<sup>35</sup> in a morning, followed by other operations till about 3 pm. He performed gastrectomies “skin to skin” (incision to closure) in 60 minutes, without the slightest indication of hurry or stress. He kept meticulous records of each case. In contrast, the reputation of anesthesia in the hospital had previously been rather poor and therefore he expected the anaesthetist to inject local anesthetic into the patient’s abdominal wall. Using this technique, the patient required less general anesthetic and recovered faster. In very sick patients (e.g. in cases of gastric hemorrhage) he could perform the entire operation under local anesthesia – a tribute to his skill and gentle handling of tissues.

There was no formal anesthesia training program, but the residents learned from each other. I began to read anesthesia literature whenever time allowed, although this was not easy due to the work load. Often, there were emergency cases all night, followed by a full schedule the following day. Nevertheless, I was able to pass the Diploma in Anesthesia and the first examination for the FFARCS<sup>36</sup> during this period. With the help of a senior pathologist at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, an article describing an interesting case was accepted by the medical journal, *The Lancet*.<sup>37</sup>

With the co-operation of the chaplain, we organized some meetings to present the Gospel. The title of the first one, at which I spoke, was “Christianity, sedative or stimulant?” – an apt title for a talk by an anesthesiologist! Mr. Tanner as well as the orthopedic surgeon Mr. Metcalf showed their support by attending the meeting.

At the end of my year in Balham, I applied for another job and was appointed to Southend General Hospital in Essex – about 40 miles from London. This also was a busy institution. The chief of anesthesia was Dr. J. Alfred Lee, who was internationally famous for his textbook “Synopsis of Anaesthesia<sup>38</sup>”.

---

<sup>34</sup> Mr. is the correct designation of a surgeon in Great Britain.

<sup>35</sup> Removal of part or whole of the stomach

<sup>36</sup> Fellow of the Faculty of Anaesthesia of the Royal College of Surgeons

<sup>37</sup> Forbat A.F., Lehmann, H. and Silk E., *Lancet* 2:1067-1070, 1953. Prolonged Apnoea following injection of Succinylcholine.

<sup>38</sup> British spelling

Besides being an excellent anesthesiologist, Dr. Lee was a wonderful teacher, highly respected, widely read, and altogether a remarkable man. As we worked together, he would question me on every aspect of the case and other topics related to it. He introduced me to many regional anesthetic techniques. Besides his teaching and wide knowledge, he was one of the kindest men I had ever met. I owe much of my subsequent professional success to the example and teaching of Dr. Lee.

While at Southend, we started a voluntary Bible Study for the resident members of the medical staff. There were only 2 rules.

1. For the purposes of this discussion, we will assume that the Bible is true, and
2. I will talk until I am interrupted!

Even though some of those attending were unbelievers, we had enjoyable times. One of the doctors, Sylvia Duckworth said to me: "We can't all be preachers" After a moment's thought, I said: "No, but we can all be witnesses." A few weeks later, she became a true Christian and served the Lord with zeal till she died in 2001.

## CHAPTER 11

### A CALL FROM AFAR

In May 1954 I passed the final exam of the F.F.A.R.C.S.<sup>39</sup> and Dr. Lee advised me to apply for a post in a teaching hospital (i.e. an academic institution). This would have set me up for an appointment as a Consultant Anaesthetist.<sup>40</sup> My year at Southend was to finish in November, but I was offered a second year.

On one of my free afternoons, I decided to visit my friends at St. James' Balham. The lady who took care of the Residents' quarters, said: "Dr. Forbat, this letter came for you today, we were going to forward it to you to Southend". The letter was from a girl I had met at the Keswick Convention the previous year. She explained that her father was a missionary surgeon at the Christian Medical College, Vellore in South India and they were sorely in need of a second anesthesiologist. The hospital was a large teaching institution with a busy surgical program, but only one missionary lady doctor from England was qualified to teach anesthesiology. She was hardly able to keep up with her responsibilities of teaching and running the operating rooms.

To me, this was a bolt from the blue. Of course, I considered myself to be a committed Christian. I had regular devotions, was active in the local Assembly, preached often in churches. Meanwhile, I had grown used to the idea that my ministry was to be in England. The thought of becoming a missionary had never entered my head. What of my parents? Mother thought I was too far from home in Southend (40 miles)! They had grown to

tolerate my faith and Christian activities, but they would surely be strongly opposed to missionary work overseas!

The Secretary of the Medical Missionary Association Hostel in London, Dr. Bennett, was a member of the church I attended in London. He was a retired medical missionary and I asked his advice. He suggested that I should talk to my parents – so I did. The result was predictable! "How can you think of going so far away? What about your career? Your future will be ruined. There are lions, tigers and snakes in India - no, don't go there."

With such "guidance", I wrote to Vellore that I did not feel the Lord was calling me to India. Very soon, I received letters from the Director, Dr. Carman and the anesthesiologist, Dr. Gwenda Lewis. "You do not realize the need and the opportunities." "Consider this letter as the equivalent of the Macedonian call

---

<sup>39</sup> Fellow of the Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons.

<sup>40</sup> In England, anesthesiologists are known as anaesthetists who are always medically qualified. This is different from a nurse anesthetist in the United States. Nurses are not permitted to give anesthetics in England.

- Come over and help us. (Acts 16:9) You have the right qualifications and we need you."

I was driven to prayer and asked the Lord to give me a clear sign. My future in the hospital would certainly be affected by this decision. Dr. Lee was very sympathetic and did not push me in either direction. One morning, in my Quiet Time, the Scripture Union reading was in 2 Corinthians 8. As I read v. 8, it hit me. *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.* PROVE THE SINCERITY OF YOUR LOVE! As if the Lord was saying, "You have been preaching to others about total surrender to my will - now PROVE THE SINCERITY OF YOUR LOVE.

The following half-day off duty, I visited the office of the "Friends of Vellore" in London. The Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, greeted me. "So, you have received my letter?"

"What letter?"

"I sent you a letter yesterday, asking you to come and see me.

"Well, I haven't received it yet."

"Anyway, since I sent that, this telegram has come from Vellore". He handed me the message. It said: "Dr. Gwenda Lewis struck with a paralytic disease. Contact Forbat at once". And there I was, sitting in his office.

There was another anaesthetist who was a possible candidate and I asked Mr. Chamberlain to call him. That man said that he had just been appointed to a post in his University Hospital and could not come. That left me to answer the call!

Now no doubt was left in my mind. I told my parents that I had to go for a short term of 2 years. Mother said "if it is such an emergency, why not go for six months?" "No" I said. "One cannot use mission money like that." So, we compromised on one year. I promised that I would return home in exactly twelve months, "but if then I feel that this is the Lord's calling, I will return to India on a long term basis, irrespective of your wishes." I gave a month's notice at the hospital and began preparations for India. On November 30, 1954, I departed in a 4-propeller engine Constellation airplane bound for Bombay.

## CHAPTER 12

### VELLORE

Dressed in a professional 3-piece suit, I stepped off the plane in Bombay. The weather in England had been chilly, but here the heat was intense. My first thought was: "If it is so hot here in December, what will it be like in summer?" From Bombay<sup>41</sup> I took another plane to Madras<sup>42</sup>, where I was met by Mr. Samuel, a clerk from Vellore, sent to accompany me on the train journey there. He told me that I would be met by the General Superintendent of the hospital, the Rev. Savarirayan. For the rest of the journey I kept repeating Sa-va-ri-ra-yan trying to remember this long name. As I learned later, long names are quite common in South India.

On arrival in the "Big Bungalow" where I was to live, I was told that breakfast would be at 6:25 am. Coming from England, where 8 am is considered early, I did not believe that they could possibly mean that. Anyway, I got up and began to have a quiet time, thinking I would get in there by 7. About 6:30, there was a knock on the door and Dr. Victor Rambo came in. He saw that I was on my knees and immediately joined me in prayer. He took me to the dining room, where a group of missionary ladies was already sitting at the breakfast table. Dr. Rambo introduced me in a loud voice - "This is Dr. Andrew Forbat - and guess what he was doing when I went in? Why, he was praying - Hallelujah!" Later, I learned that this was typical of Dr. Rambo. Among the ladies present was a pharmacist, Carol Petersen a gynecologist, Helen Whitter the hospital dietitian and a visiting dietitian from Ludhiana Medical College, Gwen Oxford. She was only with us for 5 days - she came to see what was being done in South India in her field. I thought she was an attractive, pretty girl.

Vellore was a big institution, with separate campuses for the Hospital and the College. I was quickly thrown into the hospital work. I met Dr. Gwenda Lewis, who was paralyzed in bed. There were 2 Indian "registrars" (residents) in the anesthesia department and a couple of interns. Some of the surgeons were very distinguished. Dr. Howard Somervell was famous for gastric surgery and also for having climbed on Mt. Everest when he was younger. Dr. Paul Brand (whom I had known at UCH<sup>43</sup>) was now involved in leprosy work and reconstructive hand surgery. Dr. Reeve Betts had introduced thoracic surgery and segmental lung resections to India. Other members of the surgical staff included Dr. Jacob Chandy the neurosurgeon and Dr. Norman Macpherson, the

---

<sup>41</sup> Now called Mumbai

<sup>42</sup> Now called Chennai

<sup>43</sup> University College Hospital, where I trained in London

father of the girl who first wrote to me about the need in Vellore. Dr. Brand and Dr. Betts both gained international reputation for their pioneering work.

Notwithstanding the training I had in England and having the FFARCS diploma, I had no experience in thoracic and neurosurgery. I knew what to do, but some of the equipment was unfamiliar. In particular, the set-up for blood transfusion was different and it was hard to “pump” blood. Sadly, I lost my first thoracic patient by getting behind with blood and fluid replacement. However, after a short time, I got accustomed to the new situation and could perform my clinical and academic duties in a way that was appreciated by my colleagues.

Soon after arriving, I asked if I could help the spiritual ministry and Dr. Carol Petersen invited me to substitute for her week in the daily Chapel service in the Hospital. It was the first week of Advent and I chose to give 5 talks from Matthew 24 and 25, chapters dealing with the Lord’s return. By the second morning the chapel was filled with nurses and I was quickly recognized as one who taught and preached the Gospel according to the Bible. Many on the staff, though devoted missionaries, were more liberal in their understanding and approach to Scripture, so an evangelical viewpoint was quickly recognized. Soon I was contacted by the Clinical Pathologist, Dr. William D’Senna an Anglo-Indian member of staff; rarely had I met a more devout Christian. He and John Moody, an Australian dentist, put me in touch with the Evangelical Union among the medical students. I had many happy opportunities for fellowship and service. Very soon, I realized two things. Firstly, the wonderful needs and opportunities of missionary service and secondly, how much I could learn from Indian Christians. There was also the wonderful joy of seeing students and some patients put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

One encounter with a Hindu patient was especially memorable. He had come all the way from Calcutta to be treated at Vellore in South India. He was suffering from tuberculosis and was scheduled for removal of the diseased lung. On the preoperative visit, it was clear that he was very frightened. I felt a strong urge to pray for him. The operation and anesthesia went smoothly. The next day, the patient was sitting up in bed, wheezing, out of breath and terrified. I said: “Mr. Ghosh, you need not be afraid. You had a good operation and you should be getting better each day.” Then I added: “You know, God loves you – so much that He sent His Son to die for your sins and to come into your life. If you open your heart and ask Him to come in, He will give you forgiveness and peace.”

“Doctor” he said, “My heart is open”. There, I led him in a prayer to ask Jesus to come into his heart.

The change was amazing! He began to breathe quietly and the peace of God filled his heart. For the remainder of his stay, he was full of joy. He continued to read the Bible and to grow in faith even after returning home. About a year after I returned to England, I heard from his family that Mr. Ghosh

had contracted pneumonia in his remaining lung and had passed into the presence of the Lord.

The year passed quickly and the Lord gave me a great love for the Indian people. I met some outstanding people, including Bro. Bakht Singh, a noted Indian evangelist. During the summer vacation in the Nilgiri Hills, I was blessed by the ministry of Rev. George Duncan from England.

When my year at Vellore was ending, I decided to spend the last week or so traveling through India. On a very limited budget, I traveled 3<sup>rd</sup> class<sup>44</sup> to Calcutta. A taxi ride in Calcutta can be one of the most fearsome experiences of one's life! I went on to meet Guy Bookless in Patna. He had been an officer in the Inter Schools Camps. Next stop was Ludhiana. I wanted to see Gwen Oxford again and to my delight, that month she was in charge of hospitality. I did not know that she was only doing her assigned duty, so I interpreted her caring for my needs as personal interest! However, nothing was said about a possible future relationship, either at our first meeting in Vellore, or now in Ludhiana, I left Ludhiana for Delhi to visit Roger Kennedy, (also from ISC<sup>45</sup>). From there, I took a day-trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal – far more beautiful in reality than any photograph could display. Finally, I boarded a ship in Bombay for the journey home.

---

<sup>44</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> class travel on an Indian train may include sitting on the floor, and if fortunate, to sleep on the luggage rack. Often people hang on to the doors and windows of carriages.

<sup>45</sup> Inter Schools Camps

## CHAPTER 13

### TRAGEDY AND A CHANGE OF PLANS

The journey home included my 31<sup>st</sup> birthday, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. I sought out Indians with whom to share the Gospel and one young South Indian (K. V. Thomas) did profess a new faith in Christ. Surely, my calling would be to return to Vellore as a missionary doctor and be a witness for Christ. The Captain gave me permission to conduct Christmas Day services.

On January 3, my parents met me at King's Cross Station in London, and were really happy to see me again. They were pleased that I had actually put on weight – I had deliberately eaten a lot on board ship, lest they should think that I starved in India!

My first task was to open the latest issue of the British Medical Journal in order to find a job. One advertised, was for the post of anaesthetic registrar at Hammersmith Hospital, the Royal Postgraduate Institute in London. The last day of application was to be January 1. Had I missed it? This was a very desirable appointment, so I called the hospital office, explaining that I had, on that very day, arrived from India. The secretary told me to send the application by that evening's mail collection. It would arrive in the morning post, before the scheduled time for the appointment committee. Unknown to me, one member of that committee was Dr. Beard. He knew me from the Nelson Hospital and strongly backed my application. So, within a few weeks of arrival I was working in an internationally recognized University Hospital! God wonderfully provided.

During the following few months I began to make preparations to return to India under a supporting Mission Board. I approached B.M.M.F.<sup>46</sup> and Jack Dain,<sup>47</sup> the Director, asked me whether I was certain that this was God's call. Knowing my parents opposition, I said I was only 95% certain. He also had a reservation, because I wanted to go to Vellore in South India and most of the B.M.M.F. workers were in North India. He told me to return when I was 100% certain!

After a few months, my chief at Hammersmith Hospital advised me to apply for a more senior position. In July, 1956 I was appointed Senior Anaesthetic Registrar<sup>48</sup> at Charing Cross Hospital in London. Much of my off-duty time was spent in speaking at meetings and services in different churches and various small groups.

---

<sup>46</sup> Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship – now known as InterServe.

<sup>47</sup> Jack Dain was later ordained in the Church of England and eventually became a Bishop in Sidney, Australia. He was an architect of the Lausanne Covenant on Evangelism.

<sup>48</sup> A Senior Registrar is the final training post before assuming full responsibility as a Consultant.

1956 was the time of the Hungarian uprising against the Communists. There were many Hungarian refugees in London and some of them came to a meeting for Central Europeans at my church. Many of those attending were from Russia, Poland and Ukraine. The meetings were led by Mr. Stuart Hine, a fine, dedicated and gracious Christian, who had been a missionary in Ukraine and spoke Russian and several other Slav languages fluently. It was he who had translated that wonderful hymn "How great Thou art" from Russian. However, when he tried to read from the Hungarian Bible for the benefit of the Magyars there, his pronunciation was hopeless. When my Hungarian origin became known, I was asked to speak. Back in Hungary, as a child, I had not become acquainted with a Christian vocabulary and what I remembered of the language was that of an 11 year old Jewish boy. I struggled to speak and made some stupid errors in trying to express myself. I translated "the Lord Jesus" word for word into Hungarian, but the way it came across was understood as Mr. Jesus! Still, it was better than nothing. My eyes were still on India.

-o0o-

In September of that year, my parents went for a dream vacation in the South of France. They drove there in a recently purchased Sunbeam Talbot car, of which my father was very proud. They returned on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month and then, the unthinkable happened.

I had arranged to meet with K.V. Thomas (whom I had met on the boat on our return from India). A telephone call came from my Aunt Edith (Imre's wife), telling me in grave tones to drop everything and go to her apartment. Realizing that something serious had happened, I asked K.V. Thomas to stay in the car, while I went up to my uncle and aunt's apartment. They told me that on the return journey, my father's car crashed into a truck which had made a sudden turn in front of Dad's car. My mother died instantly.



My mother

Everything changed. My father had always been very popular with his friends. He and my mother were avid bridge players and went to the club every night. My mother was still a beautiful woman and much loved by all who knew her. Dad loved her passionately. Now, he became a shattered man.

Rather than requesting a clergyman of any religion, he asked me to speak at the funeral. This was one of the hardest speaking assignments I had ever had, but the Lord gave strength. I took Job 1:21 as my text – *“The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

Dad became very depressed and also felt guilty, as he had been the driver of the car in which my mother was killed. At first, this was understandable, but he continued in what might be termed pathological mourning. He kept the urn containing my mother’s ashes in the bedroom cupboard. He changed her clothes each day, putting a different dress in front as though she were still wearing them. He became morose and would never smile.

It was obvious that I could not go abroad under these circumstances. My brother John had his own responsibilities. He was already married, at that time with 2 children and was living in Weybridge, Surrey. On the other hand, I was free to live at home and Dad needed my moral support. Besides, his business was not working and he was deeply in debt to friends and bridge partners. My own income at the hospital was very limited and there was not much I could do to help with his finances.

These were difficult days. I continued to work at Charing Cross Hospital. I prayed more intensely for my father, but he could never accept the hope that we have in Christ. Even though he was not an orthodox Jew, he could not accept faith in Jesus. In his thinking, it was Christians (i.e. non-Jews) like Hitler, who had persecuted Jewish people. He could never understand the difference between being a nominal Christian and one with a living faith in Jesus. You were born either a Jew or Christian – if you weren’t a Jew, then you were a Christian!

In January 1957, I took a short break at Lee Abbey, a Christian Conference Center in the West of England. David Payne, whom I had met in the Army, was on the staff at the time. On returning home, Dad gave me an emotional kiss before going to bed. Next morning, I rose early, planning to have a good quiet time with the Lord. An envelope addressed to me was waiting on the ledge above a radiator – it was from my father. Immediately, I went to his bed-room and found him to be deeply unconscious. I took him to Charing Cross Hospital by ambulance, intubated<sup>49</sup> him in the emergency room and had him admitted.

---

<sup>49</sup> Put a breathing tube in his windpipe

He recovered consciousness after a few hours. The psychiatrist treated him with electric shock therapy. Unfortunately, the beneficial effect did not last long and he relapsed into depression.

My thoughts went to Gwen Oxford in India. I wrote her a note, telling her of these events and asked how I could pray for her. Soon, she replied, saying that she was due for furlough in August 1958 and would be returning to England. Beyond that, her future was unclear.

My father's financial affairs were a great concern. In order to raise cash, I sold my new car at a big loss and exchanged it for a much older used car. The lodger in our apartment had been a constant source of irritation to Dad, but he owed her money and she would not leave until she received what seemed to be the enormous sum of £640. Friends lent the money, even though I could not foresee when the loan would be repaid. Also, I sent letters to his creditors, asking for patience in view of his incapacity.

By the summer of 1958, it was possible for me to be part-time at Charing Cross and to take on well-paying locums.<sup>50</sup> At St. Mary's Hospital in London (one of the University Hospitals), there was a famous surgeon by the name of A. Dickson Wright. He had a large private practice. His customary anesthesiologist became ill and I was asked to substitute. Within a few weeks, I earned enough to repay the debt. Once again, the Lord wonderfully provided for my need.

---

<sup>50</sup> Full time employees of the National Health Service were not allowed to take on outside work or to have private patients. Senior registrars and consultants were allowed to go part-time, being paid 83% of their salary but allowed to take private patients. Even so, the private fees were strictly regulated.

## CHAPTER 14

### JOINED TOGETHER

It was during the period of working with Mr. Dickson Wright, that Gwen was due to return from India. We had arranged that I should meet the “boat train” at Victoria station. While waiting, I had to go to the bathroom, the walls of which were full of filthy graffiti. Rather than look at those, I decided to open my pocket New Testament. At random it opened at Matthew 22, which began: *And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.* That was a good thought before meeting Gwen!

It so happened, that a private case with Mr. Dickson Wright was scheduled that very afternoon, so as soon as Gwen arrived, I excused myself. After the surgery, we met at the Foreign Missions Club where she was staying and I took her to dinner at a West End Restaurant. It was a warm September, and poor Gwen’s dress had torn earlier in the day. (It was the only one she had with her). Not wishing to reveal the tear, she kept her overcoat on during the whole evening. Our meal cost 27 shillings (about \$3) but Gwen thought of her cook in India, who would have to live on that amount for a whole month. She said, “Next time, let us go to a less expensive place.” I thought, “Good, at least there is a next time!”

Gwen had become a Christian in 1949, through the friendship and witness of Joan Kenworthy, the wife of the Vicar<sup>51</sup> of St. Clement’s Church, Oxford. The Kenworthy’s now had a church in Hoddesdon, about 20 miles from London. Joan not only came to meet Gwen at the boat train, but invited her to live at the Vicarage. Gwen had left Ludhiana with the understanding that she would continue her education in dietetics, to improve her qualifications before returning to India. She was able to come from Hoddesdon to London each day during her course at the Northern Polytechnic in Holloway Road, N. London. Consequently, it was easy for us to meet and get to know each other. We had many enjoyable walks together on Hampstead Heath. We were engaged at an Inter-Varsity Conference in Derbyshire, in December. Events moved quickly and our wedding took place at St. Paul’s Hoddesdon on March 30, 1959. Gwen and I sought to make the event honoring to the Lord. The wedding was conducted by the Rev. Malcolm Kenworthy, who chose Ephesians 4:32 as his text. *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* We had a joyful company of our mutual friends to help us celebrate. Gwen was “given away” by her proud father. The rest of her family

---

<sup>51</sup> This is the usual title of the Senior Pastor of an Anglican Church in England.

also came down from Dordon. My father was there, but sad that my mother could not see her son married.



Just married!

For our honeymoon, we took the car ferry across the English Channel. We spent a night in Paris and then drove across the Pyrenees to a little Spanish resort, Sitges, just north of Barcelona. It was a beautiful spot where we could relax after the previous hectic weeks. On our return journey through the Pyrenees, we stopped at the village of Montserrat. We visited the Monastery and were told that this visit earned us a reduction of 20,000 years from our time in Purgatory. That information surely brought us much comfort!

-o0o-

For the first 3 months, we lived at my father's apartment near Russell Square. Obviously, we needed a home of our own, and soon we purchased a small semi-detached house in Finchley in North London. Which church we should attend and join? Gwen's background was Anglican and I had been attending Plymouth Brethren Assemblies for morning worship, although I was open to other denominations. We agreed that we should go to a church that was faithful to teaching and preaching the Bible, irrespective of denomination. We wanted one within walking distance of our home, so that people from the church could visit. In those days, relatively few people possessed a car.

The local Anglican Church, St. Paul's was within a short walk from our house in St. Paul's Way. The service was conducted simply and reverently, so that every word in the liturgy was spoken with meaning. The sermon was another story! The Vicar, Rev. Theo Burden, was clearly a godly man, but preaching was a struggle for him. 2 days later, he called at the house to welcome us to the church. I asked how I could be of service. "What would you like to do?" asked the Vicar. "I would like to be a lay reader<sup>52</sup>" was the answer. We

---

<sup>52</sup> A lay reader was licensed to conduct Morning and Evening Prayer and to preach at these services.

thought the Vicar would fall off the chair in surprise! He had obviously never had such an offer. He told us that I needed to be confirmed by the Bishop and have some sessions with another Vicar to coach for me for the test.

We threw ourselves into the work with zeal. Besides conducting services and preaching frequently, I was put in charge of a youth club that was attended by rowdy teenagers. They were a challenge, but later one of them came to Christ. After evening service each Sunday, they came to our home. We prohibited smoking in the house, but often found cigarette butts in the bathroom! I also taught a boys' Sunday afternoon Bible Class and Gwen started a Young Wives' group in the home. This developed into a regular fellowship and several women came to Christ as a result. The women took turns to run a nursery during morning service, so that the others could be free to worship. Later, I was elected to the Parochial Church Council<sup>53</sup>. In addition, we were busy, with my work as a Consultant Anaesthetist<sup>54</sup> at several hospitals while Gwen took care of the home and family.

Our first baby was due on January 25, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul in the Church Calendar. We lived in St. Paul's Way and went to St. Paul's Church. Even without the benefit of ultrasound, we knew the baby would be named Paul! During the Christmas holidays at the end of 1959, we hosted 2 young men, one from France, the other from Cyprus. They left the very day that Paul was born, on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1960, 3 weeks before his due date. Nowadays, husbands are usually present at the birth of their children, but at that time, even as a doctor, I was not allowed to attend the delivery. Gwen phoned at 5:30 am from the hospital to say that Paul had arrived! Our second son, David followed 20 months later, on September 11, 1961. That time, Gwen was delivered at home, with the assistance of a midwife and our local doctor. Using a portable anesthetic machine which I used in private clinics, I gave Gwen nitrous oxide and oxygen. It was perhaps the only time that she really appreciated my medical skills!

My cousin Robert came to live with us for a few months in that period. He saw the care we took of Paul and stated categorically, that when he had children, he would leave them at home without baby-sitters. Happily, when many years later he did face the situation, he had matured sufficiently to be a good father.

Dad would come and visit us and enjoyed seeing his grandsons. He still lived in Russell Square in the center of London. By this time, he could not afford a housekeeper, and Gwen, accompanied with the young children, used to go by tube train<sup>55</sup>, to clean the apartment. Eventually, this became very wearisome and in any case, we felt that it was a waste of money to pay rent, when for the same cash outflow we could have bought a property for Dad and where he could live

---

<sup>53</sup> The Vestry in the Episcopal Church

<sup>54</sup> i.e. as an Attending Anesthesiologist who was considered to be fully trained.

<sup>55</sup> The Underground – the London Transport subway system.

closer to us. We obtained a mortgage and found a condominium in Finchley. Dad did not like the idea of moving from his apartment, but in the end he had little choice. He went by tube to the bridge club every night – that was his relaxation. Gwen took the boys to the apartment every morning to clean up. He was a late riser and would cough his way into the day. The boys would plead with him: “Grandy, please don’t smoke!”

-o0o-

We were feeling the pressure of paying two mortgages and also our heavy time involvement with the church. One day I saw an advertisement in the Lancet for a one year fellowship in anesthesia at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, with opportunities for work in open heart surgery. My work in London had become somewhat routine and a change seemed attractive. I was interviewed in London by the Head of the Department, Dr. Leslie Rendell-Baker (an Englishman). His first question surprised me. “Can your wife drive?” He offered me the post. We told Dad that we were considering going to the States, but only for one year.

In July, 1964, Gwen needed a few days’ rest and decided to travel to Dordon with the boys. On Tuesday evening, I called Dad and he seemed more than usually upbeat. He was hoping for success in a business transaction. I did not call on Wednesday the 15th, but, phoned him between cases from the hospital on Thursday morning. It was a time when Dad should have been home and awake. The phone kept ringing without answer. I was concerned and went to his apartment as soon as I could get away from the hospital. I went in and found him in an armchair. From his condition, it was clear that he had been dead several hours. He left a note for me. I immediately called the police and phoned Gwen to tell her the sad news. Autopsy showed that he had taken an overdose of barbiturates that he had saved up from his sleeping pills.

I never found out why he was so dreadfully depressed, the day after he seemed to be cheerful. Perhaps it was because he had finally made his decision to end his life during Gwen’s time away, although he had obviously been planning to do so for a long time. In a letter to a friend he said that “Andrew is abandoning me”, although that was far from true. No doubt grief for my mother, combined with a hopeless financial situation had taken their toll.

## CHAPTER 15

### THE NEW WORLD

After the funeral, we tried to clear up Apu's affairs and then began to make arrangements for our journey to the United States. There were several hurdles to overcome. Gwen was reluctant to go to America and suggested that I go alone, leaving her and the boys in Finchley. That was absolutely not an option for me. I had no intention of leaving a wife and young family behind for a year. To be eligible for a New York State License, I needed an immigrant visa. The US considered me to be Hungarian (even though I was a British subject) and the Hungarian quota was full. However, the British quota was open and I was able to apply on the basis of Gwen's nationality! I needed to take the ECFMG<sup>56</sup> exam for doctors wishing to practice in the US. This required preparation, because it included specialties with which, as an anesthesiologist, I had had no contact for many years. Thankfully, I passed. The National Health Service allowed me to take a year of unpaid leave. My plan was to return to the old job after my year in the States. All my colleagues said that I would never come back, but I insisted that my visit to America was only for one year! At that time I meant it.



David (3) and Paul (5) just before we left for the States

Rather than sell our house, we rented it at a nominal rate to a seminary student and his family. We sold the car to Eric Goodman, a good friend, who used to help me in the boys' Bible class at our church.

We drove to Dordon to say farewell to Gwen's family. Then, on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1965, we took a taxi to the airport. Gwen looked out of the window and said good-bye to the house. I thought she was pessimistic – but as usual, she was right!

-o0o-

We arrived in New York at the scheduled time of 2:20 pm (local time), but it took us 2 ½ hours to get through immigration, baggage claim and customs.

---

<sup>56</sup> Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates.

Mrs. Rendell-Baker waited patiently for us and took us to our apartment in Eastchester, NY. She had rented some simple furniture, but the floor was uncovered. She and several visitors stayed till after 10 pm. Gwen and I were exhausted, as our internal clocks said 3 am! As for the boys, they woke in the middle of the night (their internal clocks said it was morning) and were running around on the bare wooden floors. The lady in the apartment below us came up to complain – it was hard to explain our situation to her.

They allowed us a day for unpacking, but on the following day Dr. Rendell-Baker took me to Mount Sinai Hospital. The Bronx River Parkway on which we traveled surprised me by its beauty. In the hospital, I was introduced to the anesthetic staff and shown round. It was a big department which included several British anesthesiologists.

Returning home, we had a collision at a traffic stop – a car hit the passenger side (where I was sitting) in Dr. Rendell-Baker's car. Thankfully, it was a Rover 2000, with reinforced doors, and I was unhurt. So much for our introduction to New York. We had bought a VW "Beetle" as duty-free import before leaving England, but due to a dock-strike in New York, we did not receive the car and sea-luggage until the end of April. Meanwhile, one of the English anesthesiologists, David Chadwick, gave me a ride to the hospital every day.

Working at Mount Sinai was quite a shock. In England, I used to make my own decisions as to the kind of anesthetic to administer and surgeons had complete trust in me. Now, I was faced with rude, bossy surgeons, who would shout orders, like "give him pentothal", or "give him cyclopropane", or "give him a spinal" and "are you sure the tube is in the trachea?" They did not hesitate to curse in the operating room, frequently taking the Lord's name in vain. The reason for their lack of trust was that I had not yet been licensed by New York State, nor had I proved myself to them. Had I had the funds and not signed on for a year, I would have probably taken the next flight home!

Meanwhile, Gwen was trying to cope with living in a small apartment. It faced a main road, without a safe place for the children to play. Edith Foldes (one of my second cousins and wife of Dr. Francis Foldes, an eminent anesthesiologist) helped us to buy some used furniture. Without a car, shopping was difficult. Gwen used to borrow the shopping cart at the A & P store and wheel the boys up the hill, back to the apartment. No-one would help and she felt very lonely. Many times she wept and little David would pick up sheets of toilet tissue to wipe her eyes. "Mommy, don't cry – you know that God brought us here" Not bad for a 3 ½ year old!

Before leaving England, we decided that we would manage with one car and not be like "those Americans" who had to have two cars in one family. I had to use the VW for commuting to the hospital and Gwen was a virtual prisoner at home. We soon came to realize that things were different here and went to a

used car dealer who sold us a pre-owned Rambler. He assured us that it was in excellent condition, driven by a little old lady who used it only to drive to church. This sounded really good and we bought it, without bargaining, for the asking price of \$650. Yes, we were green!

Gradually, we settled down. We began to attend Calvary Baptist Church in New York, where Stephen Olford was Pastor. Much as we enjoyed the worship and preaching, the journey was too long and inconvenient. Some friends suggested the Ridgeway Alliance Church in White Plains, where we were warmly received. We met some young couples from Dobbs Ferry and nearby villages. They met regularly for Bible Study in their homes and soon we made friends. Especially close were Bud and Betsy Broda who had 3 sons with ages matching our boys'.

In order to obtain a New York State License, I had to sign a Certificate of Intent to become a Citizen of the United States within 10 years. At that time, I had no intention of staying in the country so long and was happy to obtain the certificate without fear of giving up my British nationality. I was then allowed to take the State Boards and after passing the requisite examination and obtaining the License, my status at the hospital improved. Surgeons were still loud, rude and bossy, but they began to trust me and even request me. Besides routine surgery, I had the opportunity of working in the hyperbaric chamber. This was a completely new experience. We were pressurized to 3 atmospheres (equivalent to 60 ft. below water). The purpose of this was to deliver a higher partial pressure of oxygen to tissues with poor circulation. Just as in submarines, we had to "surface" gradually, so as to avoid the "bends"<sup>57</sup>

After being licensed by the State, my salary increased and the financial situation became more comfortable. Some of my father's debts were paid off. One morning, at prayer time, the thought came "Surely you are not here only to make money". Thinking about this, another idea came - "What about returning to India?" Later, that very day, Gwen showed me an article in the magazine "Here in Ludhiana" saying that the Christian Medical College in Ludhiana was in need of a dietitian and an anesthesiologist!

I was already 41 and wondered if that were too late to embark on a missionary career. I wrote to Frank Prior who had been a fellow-student at University College Hospital and was now the Head of the Anaesthesia Department in Ludhiana. He replied saying "Your letter was a rebuke to our faith. We had just about given up praying that you would make this offer"!

We were willing to go and clearly, we were needed. Soon we received an invitation to join the staff in Ludhiana from Dr. Ken Scott, the Director.

---

<sup>57</sup> The "bends" are caused when nitrogen in solution in blood forms bubbles of gas as the pressure is lowered.

However, several hurdles had to be overcome. We still had financial obligations in England and we calculated that it would take about 19 months to meet those fully. Our house in London had to be sold. We needed a Mission Agency to sponsor us and to find support for our journey and living expenses while we were in India. Our little apartment would not have been suitable for another 19 months and we needed a new home, preferably in the same school district.

In a wonderful way, God provided for every one of these needs. The Realtor whom Gwen consulted, said there was a house for rent in a cul-de-sac, within walking distance from the elementary school. The owner had been called to work in Holland, but would be returning in 19 months – just long enough for our needs. It was a very pleasant house. Miss Saalfrank, who owned the Kindergarten where our boys attended, sold us some of her furniture and Gwen painted the pieces to look almost new. There was a rickety old piano in the basement, and little David immediately started playing notes on it. Gwen took him to a piano teacher, who thought that David was talented and indeed, within a few weeks, he was able to play Bach's minuet in G. Too young to read music, he learned the notes with the aid of numbers and letters on the keys and on his fingers.

Our house in London was bought by one of our friends in St. Paul's church. It so happened, that the money from the sale was deposited in the bank just before the British pound was devalued from \$2.80 to \$2.40. There was nothing we could do about it, but shrug shoulders. After all, it was only money!

The Mission agency to which we applied was the B.M.M.F. – the same mission that I was interested in 9 years previously when I thought of returning to Vellore. There was a US-Canadian branch now, headquartered in Philadelphia. Our church in White Plains could not support us because the policy of the Christian and Missionary Alliance was to work only through its own missionaries and mission stations. However, when some of the members heard our plans, we were given some wonderful gifts, including a washing machine and a refrigerator. The members of our Home Bible Study group also pledged their support.

We decided to return to Calvary Baptist Church in New York. Our son Paul, on his own initiative, mentioned in Sunday School that we were preparing to go to India. The teacher of that class was a member of the Mission Committee, and without any move on our part, we were invited to be interviewed by the Committee. There, before the interview, they held a session of prayer for the various missionaries already supported by the church. We knew we would be prayed for if we were to be sent by this church. To our great delight, the Church decided to underwrite half of our support - far above anything we could have expected. Before leaving for India, we were commissioned by the Pastor, Rev. Stephen Olford accompanied by representatives from the B.M.M.F. Board.

Meanwhile, I continued to work at Mount Sinai Hospital. I felt it would be wise to obtain certification from the American Board of Anesthesiology, even though my F.F.A.R.C.S. from England was recognized as an equivalent qualification. In September 1966, Gwen and I flew to Colorado Springs to take and pass the examination. Gwen's parents were with us at the time and they took care of the boys. After Board Certification I became a 100% partner in the anesthesia group and when the time came to resign my job, it was a great surprise to the others that I would quit a well-paying job and the comfort of living in America, to go to India on a subsistence wage.

Finally, we were ready to go. Because I continued to work at Mount Sinai Hospital till almost the last day, Gwen was left with most of the packing. This was a long, difficult and wearisome task. We left some of our furniture with the Broda's (members of our Bible Study Circle.) We took the furniture over on Thanksgiving morning, being ignorant of the significance of this holiday to Americans. The Broda's were very gracious in allowing us to do this and did not complain. Some of our property had to be taken to England, and the rest divided between air freight for immediately needed things and sea luggage for later use. Gwen bought clothes, shoes and toys for the boys to last for 5 years as she knew most of the items would not be available in India.



*Paul and David shortly before we left for India*

## CHAPTER 16

### BACK TO INDIA

On December 6, 1967, we boarded the SS United States for England. Christmas was spent with Gwen's parents. After leaving them, we said goodbye to our friends and families in the London area and began the journey east on January 15. En route to India, we visited Budapest, the city of my birth and then spent a day or two in Athens followed by 10 days in Israel. It was wonderful to walk in Nazareth, see Lake Galilee and stay in Jerusalem; to travel on the Jericho Road through the wilderness where King David had wandered and see the small patches of oasis of "green pastures and still waters"<sup>58</sup>. The ruins of old Jericho lay alongside the new city. We saw the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls had been found. Visiting the places where our Savior walked, lived, died and rose, gave us a new perspective on the Bible and the Gospels. It was a real encouragement as we were proceeding to our work in India.

-o0o-

We arrived in Bombay on January 26 and stayed in a guest house while our crates were unloaded. All our cargo had been shipped from New York in two big crates. There was no vehicle capable of taking them in Bombay, so the big crates were broken down and the contents reloaded into 24 smaller ones. After a 2 day train journey, we arrived in Ludhiana in the small hours of the morning. Despite the early hour, Dr. Scott, Dr. Prior and others were there to welcome us at the railway station.

In the course of the next few days, we met other members of the staff, including Dr. Eggleston, the Professor of Surgery, Dr. Feierabend who specialized in plastic surgery and Dr. David Barnhouse, a urological surgeon. He was the son of the late Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, who had been Pastor of 10<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and was an internationally known Bible teacher. Interestingly, we met 2 Hungarians, both with home residence in Switzerland. One of them was a physician, the other, who was a converted Jew like me, was a pharmacist. What a surprise, that there should be 2 Hungarian Jewish Christians working in the same Christian missionary institution in India!

Our home was a nice little apartment in a house with 4 units. I began work almost immediately. The boxes arrived on February 4 by horse-drawn carts. It was fun seeing the workers dismantle them, carefully saving the nails. When we wrote home about this, the church sent us a package with two boxes of new, shiny nails!

---

<sup>58</sup> Psalm 23:2

Anesthesia practice in Ludhiana was very different from the States. We had to strike a delicate balance between running a department that fitted a first-class teaching institution and training students who would eventually work in small and ill-equipped mission hospitals. Furthermore, the cost of the anesthetic agents had to be considered and many anesthetics commonly used in the States were not even available. Dr. Prior was very enthusiastic about teaching simple methods with available drugs. Thus, our principal anesthetic agent was ether. It was delivered to the patient through a graduated vaporizer (the EMO, designed in Oxford). Ether and oxygen of course were highly explosive, but the EMO was designed so that it could be used with room air and no additional cylinders were needed. We induced anesthesia with Pentothal and a muscle relaxant, intubated the trachea, gave enough ether to establish anesthesia and then gave just enough to maintain unconsciousness. With the aid of the Oxford bellows, we could ventilate the patient while he was paralyzed with curare like drugs. In this way, we could give a good anesthetic without resorting to much apparatus or expensive drugs, which the patients could not afford. We considered even halothane was too expensive for routine use.

-o0o-

On March 1, Gwen and the boys made the overnight journey to Landour so that Paul and David could start classes in Woodstock School. Landour is a village just above Mussoorie, at about 7500 ft. in the foothills of the Himalayas. Overseas missionaries as well as Indian families go there to escape the intense summer heat. For missionaries, conferences are held during the summer break. Language School was located in Landour Community Church. From the bungalows where most families lived to the Community Church was a good 700 ft climb on very rough terrain. We were leaner and fitter at the end of the summer!

Woodstock School is an International school. Originally it was founded for the children of missionaries, but now accepts students from many religions and countries. Prominent families send their children for a good education, taking advantage of Woodstock's excellent and dedicated international staff of teachers. The beautiful campus is in a spectacular setting with a stunning view of snow-covered Himalayan peaks on the horizon.

In April, I joined the family for language study in Landour. Each morning I made the climb to the Language School, where a class of recent arrivals was taught by Mr. Kurial. He was a good teacher and I enjoyed the lessons. In the afternoons, another teacher came to the house for private lessons. Hindustani was unlike anything I had learned before. It had a different alphabet, based on Sanskrit. The language is a blend of Hindi and Urdu and is spoken by most people in North India. After a while, I began to notice a few similarities to Hungarian. The words for "pocket" and "dog" were almost identical in the two

languages. A Hungarian slang word, used by gypsies for “food”, was the same as the past participle of the word “to eat” in Hindustani. Both languages use post-positions rather than prepositions. Hindustani infinitives all end with “-na” and Hungarian infinitives with “-ni”. The ‘Magyars’ of Hungary originated somewhere in Mongolia and it is possible that there were some common origins in the development of the two languages.

-o0o-

One morning, a missionary came running up to the language school saying “Your little boy is hurt!” (There was no telephone communication.) I went down immediately, to find that Paul had fallen down the side of a cliff. He had tried to retrieve a home-made bow and arrow which another boy had thrown over the cliff. Thankfully, his fall was broken by the roof of a bungalow lower down, but it was still a 20 ft. drop. Gwen had already taken him to the small Landour Community Hospital, where x-ray showed a supracondylar<sup>59</sup> fracture of the elbow. There was no orthopedic surgeon in Landour and the general surgeon put Paul’s arm in traction to prevent cutting off circulation to the arm. While he was in the hospital, we were able to communicate between visits, using a pair of toy walkie-talkies we had brought from the States. There were no complications and his arm has good function even though it is still somewhat deformed. We are thankful that he is alive.

-o0o-

The monsoon broke in July. It rained almost constantly. The vegetation was covered with mosses and the atmosphere was very humid, so that clothes and books became moldy. At the same time, the mountain and the valley had a new beauty of their own and we witnessed (and photographed) some magnificent sunsets and spectacular flashes of lightning.

When it was time for Gwen and me to return to Ludhiana, the boys decided to stay in boarding at Woodstock School. Unfortunately, Paul caught paratyphoid fever and was hospitalized. He was also highly allergic to cats. This became a problem, because in order to control the rat population, cats were allowed to run freely in the dormitories.<sup>60</sup> Paul had several attacks of asthma and bronchopneumonia, requiring admission to hospital. Eventually, Gwen brought him down from the hills, to be taught at home in Ludhiana.

The following year David returned to Woodstock School, but Paul stayed in Ludhiana until March. At that time we arranged for the boys to stay in a hostel run by Ken and Wilma Stewart of the Baptist Mid-Missions. This worked well for a while, but a series of illnesses affected our family. The most serious occurred in

---

<sup>59</sup> A fracture of the lower end of the humerus. The displacement of the fragments can cut off the blood supply of the lower arm, with subsequent nerve damage and contracture of the elbow.

<sup>60</sup> Because of their belief in reincarnation, Hindus do not want to kill rats or any other animal, in case a relative’s soul lives in one.

Ludhiana after we returned from Language School. I was already there, having taken over the department for Dr. Prior's furlough. Gwen was returning from Landour with some Australian visitors. She was suddenly struck with severe pain and swelling in the left knee and other joints. At first we thought it was rheumatoid arthritis. She was admitted to hospital and given heavy doses of salicylates<sup>61</sup>, which caused toxic side-effects, including hallucinations. Gwen was sure she saw mice crawling out of the air conditioner! The tests for rheumatoid arthritis were all negative and a full diagnosis was never made.

On July 21, 1969, the day after Gwen's admission to hospital, we received a telegram that for the second time, Paul had a fractured elbow. In celebration of Moon Landing Day, Paul and the other boys were jumping around on their bunk beds. He caught his foot on a sheet and fell to the floor. He was brought down to Ludhiana for surgery and admitted to Gwen's room. They learned to play chess together!

-o0o-

The work in Ludhiana kept me busy, both with teaching students and giving anesthetics. Much of this teaching was done in the operating room. Some students could be frustrating. They would not admit to ignorance, so when asked a question to which they had no answer, they just stayed silent. One day, after asking the same question for the third time, I said: "You know, I can talk to a wall, but I cannot teach it. You have to interact with me and if you don't know the answer, please say so. I know that you don't know everything – if you did, you would be the teacher and I the student!"

We hosted a small group of students in our home every week, hoping to introduce them to the Lord. For some time, I conducted a Bible Study group for students and, when invited, would speak at their meetings.

From time to time, we would take family vacations. We visited Varanasi (Benares) and saw the profusion of Hindu temples with their various idols. Another time, we traveled by train to South India. On this trip, I had the opportunity of revisiting Vellore. Afterwards we stayed with Joe and Edith Mullins<sup>62</sup> and their family in Bangalore. A few days later we traveled on to Mangalore, a small town lying on the Western coast of India, on the Eastern shore of the Arabian Sea. There, we lived in a very primitive house, but enjoyed waking before dawn to watch fishermen as they brought their catch in before dawn.-o0o-

In March 1970, we got news that Gwen's father had had a stroke. Gwen flew home to England. The boys and I went to Amritsar Airport, to meet her on

---

<sup>61</sup> Aspirin-like drugs

<sup>62</sup> Edith was Gwen's long-time friend from Oxford days. Gwen had been bridesmaid at Joe and Edith's wedding during her first tour in India..

her return. She had a long and scary flight on the Afghan Ariana Airline. (The airline had already been nicknamed “Scaryana”) It was a long, hot wait for the plane to arrive and land, but it was great to have Gwen back and the family together again.

In May, we decided to summer once more in Landour, hoping that if Paul stayed in our bungalow instead of a hostel, he might remain healthy. However, he developed asthma almost immediately. It appeared that we could neither keep him from getting sick, nor educate him adequately in India. We discussed the matter with our leaders in B.M.M.F., and they advised us to return home. I was very reluctant to do this, having made a life-time commitment to missions – but it seemed that there was no choice.

Should we return to England or to America? I felt that in England, my chances of getting a consultant post were low, especially as I had given up my previous positions. In America, I had had a position in a University Hospital. I wrote to Dr. Rendell-Baker at Mount Sinai and also to Dr. Francis Foldes, who was Chief of Anesthesia at Montefiore Hospital in New York. Dr. Foldes’ reply came by return mail. It was in the form of a contract for a position as an Assistant Professor! Montefiore Hospital is a prestigious University Hospital, affiliated with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

-o0o-

We left Ludhiana on October 23. As a family, we flew to Katmandu (Nepal) to visit missionary friends working there. On our way home, we stopped in Athens and Rome. It was fun standing on Mars Hill, where the Apostle Paul had argued with the philosophers<sup>63</sup> and awesome to see the ruins of the Coliseum in Rome, where so many Christians had been thrown to the lions during Nero’s persecution of the church. After arriving in England, we spent Christmas with Gwen’s parents in Dordon. We were glad to see that her father had improved since the stroke, although he was still limited in what he was able to do.

---

<sup>63</sup> Acts 17:22

## CHAPTER 17

### RETURN TO NEW YORK

We arrived at JFK on December 29, to a snowy winter in New York. Dr. Schapira, one of the anesthesiologists at Montefiore Hospital was about to leave on sabbatical and had offered to rent his house to us. He also asked the boys to take care of their 4 cats! When we explained how allergic Paul was to cats, he promised to clean the place and put the cats into boarding. Gwen immediately said that this would not work, but I wanted to give it a try. In many ways, it was a nice house and near to our friends the Brodas in Dobbs Ferry.

For the first few weeks I had to travel on deputation. Meanwhile, Gwen and the children stayed in the house. She vacuumed all the drapes and carpets, but it was impossible to remove all the cat dander. Within a few days, Paul was admitted to hospital with severe asthma. The doctor advised Gwen to move from that house as soon as possible. She consulted the Realtor who had found the house in Eastchester, NY that we had rented before we left for India. At first she had nothing to offer, but a day or so later, called to say that a couple in Dobbs Ferry were going to Mexico for the winter months and wanted to rent their house. There was no history of cats. This house was also in Dobbs Ferry, secluded behind a long winding driveway. The privacy this provided also necessitated a lot of shoveling in the deep snow. There was a grand piano in the living room and David could use it for practice. Almost immediately he started taking lessons with a local teacher. Both boys were well prepared for school – their education in India had enabled them to be at least equal and perhaps somewhat ahead of their peers

While waiting to move into that house, our Mission arranged for us to spend a few weeks in a residence for missionaries in Ventnor, NJ. ..

The Dobbs Ferry house was only available for a limited time and we began looking for a house of our own. We could not afford much, especially as the savings we had invested in the stock market had lost much of their value. While we were away, the Dow Jones index had fallen from 1000 to 600. Once again, God provided in a wonderful way. Mr. Robert Hanson had recently lost his wife to cancer. He felt that he could not remain in his house with all its memories. When he heard that we had just returned from mission work in India, he went out of his way to accommodate us. We agreed on a sale price of \$50,000, which was a very good deal, even then. A week or two before the sale, he offered us all his very beautiful furniture for only \$3000 and in addition, all his china and crockery for an extra \$50. By April 1, we were able to move into a fully furnished house – something we would have never believed possible. God is good!

The house was situated in the Edgemont section of Greenburgh, New York, between Dobbs Ferry and Scarsdale. Our street was in a cul-de-sac and most of our neighbors had children in the same age range as our boys. We were in a prosperous area – in fact, our private joke was that we had lowered the standard of the neighborhood! There was a large Jewish population and generally the attitude was very materialistic. The schools had an excellent academic reputation. We bought an upright piano for David and soon found him a piano teacher.

For a few months, we continued attending Calvary Baptist Church in New York. The services were inspiring and Dr. Olford's preaching was always powerful, clear, Biblical and challenging. He was indeed, one of the greatest preachers of his time. However, we felt that we needed a local fellowship, both for ourselves and the boys. We returned to Ridgeway Alliance Church in White Plains, where we already had friends. Some members of the neighborhood Bible Study group (to which we belonged before going to India) also attended there. I was asked to teach an adult Sunday School class and continued to do that for the years we spent in New York. During this period, David had a deep spiritual experience at a Retreat organized by the Alliance Church and came back on fire for the Lord. He asked to be baptized (by immersion) in the church

-oOo-

Work at Montefiore Hospital was much more pleasant than it had been at Mount Sinai. Like Mount Sinai, it was a Jewish Hospital and the majority of the staff was Jewish. The Chairman of anesthesiology, Dr. Foldes had an international reputation and considerable authority. Consequently, the other members of the department were also treated with respect. I had the opportunity to give anesthetics in all specialties, including open heart surgery. After a few years, I was asked to take charge of the Intensive Care Unit. This was a new experience and a challenge. I learned a great deal more about ventilators and respiratory physiology and in turn tried to pass on this knowledge during rounds and lectures.

1975 was the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our having first come to the States and I needed to become a Citizen to satisfy the requirements of the New York State Board. By this time, we had settled in the States, were part of the Community and felt it right to seek Citizenship and be able to vote. Our years in India did not count towards our residential requirements for naturalization. We submitted our papers soon after returning to New York and waited. The authorities set the date for naturalization for March 22 1975 – almost exactly 10 years after we arrived. Even though we now had US Passports, we were still recognized as British subjects when traveling in England.

Meanwhile, the boys were growing into adolescents. When they reached their 16<sup>th</sup> birthdays, they also chose to become US citizens. Paul took up guitar

and fancied himself as a future rock star. He also learned to sail a Sunfish while at a camp with Norman Friberg, one of our very gifted BMMF missionaries. David was doing well with piano and received a scholarship for the Westchester Conservatory of Music.

## CHAPTER 18

### MOVE TO THE MID-WEST

In 1977 I received an invitation from Bryan Roberts, who had been one of the British anesthesiologists at Mount Sinai Hospital. He had recently been appointed Professor of Anesthesia at Wright State University in Dayton, OH and he asked me to help with setting up the Department. The salary was to be lower than at Montefiore Hospital, but I was told that living costs would also be less. There was also an opportunity for some private practice. Gwen flew to Dayton to look at the area and on the return flight, she “happened” to sit next to a man who said he was being transferred. It goes almost without saying, that we bought his house! Once again, we were thankful to God for His guidance and provision. In a way, this was not a bad time to move. Paul had already graduated from Edgemont High School, and David could finish his junior and senior years at Centerville High School.

Soon after moving, our neighbor across the street, Clara Lowe, invited us to Fairhaven Church, a short distance from our house. This church was also part of the Christian Missionary Alliance and we soon found friends.

Gwen was recommended to the Wasson studios where David could continue his piano lessons. Mr. Wasson gave David an audition and immediately accepted him, but advised that he should have a grand piano. He referred us to the widow of a piano tuner, who had a Steinway Grand for sale - originally priced at \$2500. When she heard that it was for David, she voluntarily reduced the price to \$2000. A wonderful provision from the Lord!



Our family in Dayton

By now, David was really serious about piano practice. He worked on the first movement of Mendelssohn's Piano-concerto #1 and before long, won first prizes in competitions in Columbus and Lima OH. After the competition he had an opportunity to perform with the Columbus Symphony (at a high school). He continued to grow in his faith and used his musical gift in the church. His witness resulted in other boys becoming Christians.

Meanwhile, Paul was admitted to Duke University to study engineering. After a few months, he decided that he did not like it and in his second year changed to liberal arts. He was active in the Inter-Varsity group and joined a singing group called "J.C. Power and Light" They visited our church in Dayton to give a concert. Later in that year, he decided to leave Duke and go to Miami University (in Oxford, OH) to study "industrial arts" with a view to becoming a teacher in practical subjects such as woodwork. We felt that this was a waste of his academic abilities, but had to leave him to follow his own course. While at Miami University, he attended a concert by Don Francisco, a Christian artist. Paul told him of his desire to do music and was advised to go to Los Angeles.

-o0o-

Gwen already had experience in Real Estate in New York and she began working again in Dayton. She was well qualified, with a Broker's license and the GRI.<sup>64</sup> She opened her own business and dedicated it to helping young couples who were buying their first home. Consequently, she worked primarily with buying and selling small houses. Often she would see a problem with a house and counsel the buyer against the purchase. We used the money she earned to bring Gwen's mother to the States each year. Her father had died earlier, in 1974. When Gwen's mother could no longer make the flights, Gwen would fly to England 2 or 3 times a year to see her. The Real Estate income helped to finance these flights.

-o0o-

David graduated from Centerville High School in 1979. He had already set his sights on music. He was advised to audition before Mr. John Perry, a well respected teacher in Austin, TX. Mr. Perry said that he would be glad to accept David as a student, but not in Austin, as he was moving to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. David returned to Dayton, rather sad, thinking that he would not be allowed to go to LA, but we felt that he should not be denied this opportunity. It so happened that summer that I was planning to go to a medical conference in San Francisco. . Gwen and I decided that while in California we should visit USC<sup>65</sup> in Los Angeles. There, we obtained some brochures in which we saw that the music department had a new course in "studio guitar". We showed this to Paul and he immediately decided to go for an

---

<sup>64</sup> Graduate of the Realty Institute

<sup>65</sup> University of Southern California

audition. He boarded a bus to Los Angeles and was given a conditional acceptance. So, at the beginning of the new term, we watched our two sons get into our little red Chevette, as they left for their College days in Los Angeles. The nest was empty!

College education for 2 boys was very expensive. Our income was too high to get assistance, but not high enough to afford the tuition fees! At this time I approached the private practice group in Miami Valley Hospital, where I had been working as a member of the Wright State University team. Anesthesia Associates generously accepted me as a full partner. This was an ideal situation in many ways. The only change in my work was that instead of being paid for teaching and giving anesthesia without remuneration, I was now teaching for free and being paid for anesthesia! I was able to continue teaching students and residents as a "clinical professor". The financial rewards of private practice were much better than University pay and we were better able to manage the College educational fees of our boys.

Private practice also gave rise to some stresses. Surgeons were always pressing me to hurry – this was difficult to do while concurrently teaching students. There was also a great deal of internal competition amongst anesthesiologists in the group, for the best and most lucrative cases. I was asked to be Chairman of the Department of Anesthesia and was able to institute various procedures to ensure that practice was up to modern standards of care.

-o0o-

Paul graduated with a BA in music in 1983. He wanted to use his musical training in the Lord's service. Much contemporary Christian music being shallow, he wanted to write better music and lyrics. In order to go deeper into his faith, he decided (with counsel from his Pastor at the Church of the Open Door) to attend Talbot Theological Seminary. He did well there and finished with a Master of Divinity degree.

Immediately after graduating from USC, Paul married Pamela Savage on Gwen's birthday, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1983. Gwen's mother was present for the wedding. Pam's parents lived in St. Louis. Pam had studied journalism at USC and was also involved in the Christian Fellowship. After finishing Seminary, Paul became Pastor of a small, struggling Church, in Simi Valley, CA.

David also graduated in 1983 with the degree of Bachelor of Music, and married Sue Ann Bangert on July 14 the following year. Sue Ann had been a fellow student at USC, majoring in cello. Her parents lived in Los Angeles. After their marriage, David and Sue Ann moved to Ohio where David worked for a Masters' degree at the Cincinnati Conservatory. Sue Ann got a position in the cello section of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. We were able to buy a small house for their use during their stay in Cincinnati. It was close enough to Dayton that we could see them quite frequently.

## CHAPTER 19

### PLANNING RETIREMENT

By 1987, I was weary with the politics in the hospital and resigned as Chairman of the Department. We began thinking about retirement and made trips to Florida, Georgia, Charlotte and Greensborough NC. We decided on four criteria – Climate, Culture, Communication and Community. We wanted a mild four season climate, easy access to airports for international travel, opportunities for learning and culture and a pleasant, small community. My first reaction was that there was no such place. Small communities did not have good access to major airports. Major airports were in big cities, all with unpleasant climates. Then, we heard that Piedmont Airlines (later to become US Air) had introduced a flight from Charlotte to London. That meant that North Carolina was “on the map”. Later, we read in the Dayton Daily News that Asheville NC was opening a “Center for Creative Retirement” in association with the University of North Carolina in Asheville.

When visiting Asheville, we stayed with Dr. and Mrs. Ken Scott. Dr. Scott had been the Director of the Christian Medical College in Ludhiana. He recommended a Realtor in Black Mountain, but she could not find the kind of property we wanted. She said: “If that is what you want, you will have to build it.” When we told Dr. Scott, he showed us some building lots almost adjoining their home in Swannanoa.

During our visit, we were introduced to an Architect and a Builder. From Dayton, Gwen drove to Asheville several times to discuss plans for the house. She was scheduled for back surgery in July 1988, so that most of the arrangements for the sale and closing of our home had to be made before that time. Following the surgery, we moved into the Residence Inn in Dayton for Gwen’s recovery. A month after the operation, having said good-bye to our friends, Gwen flew (driving was still restricted for her) and I drove to Asheville. Another chapter of our lives had closed.

-o0o-

As our house was not yet built, Dr. Scott arranged for us to rent the cottage adjoining his house. It belonged to his brother-in-law, Dr. Ted Stephenson. From there, we could walk over to the building site, talk to the Builder and make any needed alterations before it was too late. Much of our furniture was still in storage in Dayton. Our plan was that the house should have a lower level which could be used by missionaries on furlough, or by our own family. Because of the steepness of the proposed driveway, it was difficult for the builders’ trucks to use it and a decision was made to raise the house by about 8 ft. Thus, the lower level rose above the ground and it became possible to include

an additional garage. Under the house, there was enough room to have a space for garden tools, a furnace and the water heaters. Our house was designated as 59 Morton Circle, Swannanoa and we occupied it in February 1989.

One of our goals in retirement was to travel for short-term mission trips. When I was approached by the Veterans Association to work at the VA hospital, I accepted the offer with the understanding that they could call me whenever I was needed and I would work if I was available. This left me free to take time off whenever I wished to be away. Indeed, we made several trips overseas. The first one was to Haiti. Dr. Nelson, one of the local doctors who had been instrumental in starting the Hopital Lumiere in Bon Fin, asked me if I could go. As it “turned out”, a young doctor, Scott Agnew, whom I had taught in Dayton, was working there! On this occasion, I went alone, but on most other journeys, Gwen accompanied me. In 1990, we attended the InterServe quadrennial conference in Karachi. On the way, we visited our missionary partners in Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, India and finally in Pakistan. In Turkey we saw not only sights in Istanbul, but were able to visit Ephesus. There we saw the ruins of the ancient library, the temple of Diana and the ruins of the church where the Apostle John had been the Bishop. In Peshawar, on the Afghanistan border of Pakistan, we saw the camp for Afghan refugees and the work that was being done to help them.

In 1992 I was invited to help in Afghanistan. This was a time of fighting between various war-lords – in fact, the State Department said they did not want US citizens to go there.. When I arrived, Richard Penner the leader of the IAM<sup>66</sup> showed me where his car had recently been damaged by shells. I gave lectures by interpretation and helped with anesthesia. Never had I seen such outdated and dilapidated equipment in a city hospital where thoracic surgery was practiced! Most drugs needed for modern anesthesia were not available. Where possible, I used regional blocks. During this time, I could not communicate with Gwen at all. My letters arrived after I returned home! In my last 3 days in Kabul, there was heavy shelling resulting in many casualties, I was asked to help in the Red Cross Hospital and they allowed me to use their satellite phone to call home. I talked with Gwen for the first time in a month. After leaving Kabul, I spent two more weeks in India, where I visited Mussoorie and worked in Herbertpur.

The following spring, Gwen and I returned to India to work with Dr. Colin Binks in Satbarwa, Bihar. This was such a remote place, that the hospital did not even have an internal telephone. If a doctor was needed in a ward, the nurse would send a messenger to the doctors’ quarters with a “chitti”<sup>67</sup>- a note, informing the doctor as to what was needed. While there, we heard a news broadcast of the B.B.C<sup>68</sup> on our little short-wave radio. There had been a

---

<sup>66</sup> International Assistance Mission

<sup>67</sup> chitti is the Hindustani word for letter

<sup>68</sup> British Broadcasting Company

tremendous storm on the East Coast of the USA – “the storm of the century”. It affected N. Carolina. We thought that if it was reported on the B,B,C, broadcast, it must be serious. We wanted to phone home to ask the Scotts if our house was all right. But where would we find a telephone?

A wealthy merchant’s relative was in the hospital at the time and he heard of our need. He took us to his house in Daltonganj, a city about 20 miles away. The family had already retired, but they all rose to see these “Americans” making a call to the States. We gave him Dr. Scott’s number to call. Our host placed the call – and then we waited and waited in the bedroom where THE PHONE was located. The family kept bringing tea and dainties. Finally, the connection was made and we heard from Mrs. Scott that our house was not damaged, but there were several feet of snow on the ground. When the excitement died down, this kind man drove us back to Satbarwa. He would not accept money for the overseas call or for the gas he used. He was so impressed with the kindness and love shown in the hospital that he was prepared to go out of his way to help one of us.

After leaving Satbarwa, we traveled through Varanasi (Benares). People were bathing in the Ganges River and the dead were being cremated in funeral pyres on the River bank.

Our journey then took us to Katmandu, where we spent a month, teaching and helping at Patan Hospital. Katmandu is a dirty city. The air is so polluted that even the cycle rickshaw drivers wear masks. The City is full of Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas.

At the end of our time, we spent a week in Pokhra, where we visited the “Shining” Hospital. One of our InterServe partners, Diane Turner was working as an occupational therapist with the leprosy patients. It was an inspiration to see her love and care for these poor and rejected members of society. In Pokhra we had a beautiful view of “Fishtail” Mountain, one of the highest peaks in the Himalayas.

-o0o-

Since coming to Asheville, I had opportunities to teach adults in church Sunday School. Gwen taught a group of women. When visiting one church, we mentioned that I was born in Hungary. We were immediately introduced to a Hungarian lady, who, a few days later, took me to meet a small group of Hungarians at a Bible Study. I was asked to give my testimony in Hungarian – something I had never done before. Indeed, my Hungarian was so rusty that I had great difficulty finding the right words. Nevertheless, I continued to attend and eventually, I was asked to teach the group. With practice, I learned to speak about spiritual matters in Hungarian and continued with the group for several years.

Not only did we go on mission trips, but when we were home our house was often occupied with visitors – some who stayed for several months. Paul and Pam, David and Sue Ann visited from time to time. Other visitors included my brother John and his wife Mary, and various family members and friends from England. Among them were my nephew Anthony with his wife Jane and 3 boys. We had visits from cousins Geoffrey and his wife Elissa and later, Vera and her son Clive and at another time, Roger who lives in Australia. On Gwen's side of the family, her nephew Mark and his wife Angie together with their children Andrew and Sarah were also our guests.

The lower level of the house was used to accommodate our friends Al and Edie Fink while their house was being built. We knew the Fink's from Ludhiana. In fact, in this small area we had three Ludhiana families (The Scotts, Finks and ourselves). Another time a missionary family stayed with us for 4 months.

During these years, Paul and Pam's children, Rachel and Bryan were born. David and Sue Ann's children are Luke and Hanna. All of them are precious grandchildren, gifts from the Lord. We paid several visits to Paul's family in Simi Valley, CA and David's family in their different locations in, Pittsburgh, Dallas and Hattiesburg, MS. Paul got involved in commercial real estate when his little church in Simi Valley could no longer support him. He still helps his former Pastor, in a small mission church in Los Angeles. David obtained a doctorate in piano performance at the prestigious Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and is currently working as a Professor at the University of Central Oklahoma.

## CHAPTER 20

### **LOOKING BACK - AND FORWARD**

As I think back over my life, I am amazed and thankful at the wonderful way in which God in his Providence has sheltered, prepared and provided for me. Recently, we have been working on the memoirs of my cousin Adel, when she was in Auschwitz. As we read of the horrors of the Holocaust and the unspeakable sufferings of even those who survived, I cannot help but wonder that God in His mercy led my parents to leave Budapest in 1936, years before the Germans occupied Hungary. Even though we lived through the bombings in London during World War II, I was spared the carnage that took place on the battlefields of Europe, N. Africa, Russia and S.E. Asia. I was allowed to grow up in a stable home, given a good education. At home and in Scouts, I received a moral and ethical foundation for life. In University, God reached down to me through the friendship with Derrick Rose, who showed me by his life as well as his words, the need for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. Without any planning on my part, He led me to India, where I met Gwen, who became my wife, companion and life-partner.

We have so much for which to be thankful. Gwen and I have each other and God supplied all our needs along the way and has given us two fine sons with their wives and our 4 grandchildren. He gave us a beautiful home in one of the loveliest parts of the United States. From every window, we see the Smoky Mountains range. We are thankful for friends, both locally and in the many parts of the world where we have lived and worked.

Now, Gwen and I look back to a full life in which God blessed us with the fellowship of believers all over the world. We had the immense privilege of being allowed to serve our Lord, both in the ministry of the Word and in being part of a healing team.. Above all, we are thankful to our Father, who has saved us by sending His Son to die for us.

Our only sadness is that in this great country, distances are so vast that it is hard for the family to be together. However, in March 2005 we all met in New Orleans, to celebrate Gwen and my 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays, our 46<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and 40 years of living in the United States. It was also the opportunity for Rachel and Bryan to meet their cousins, Luke and Hanna for the very first time.



Family reunion March 2005

Standing: David and Paul

Sitting: Sue Ann with Hanna, Luke, Gwen, Andrew, Rachel, Bryan and Pam,

Now our traveling is restricted. Gwen has had knee and hip replacements and more recently, a broken wrist. We do not know how long we shall be able to manage our house and yard, although the house was designed and built to allow wheel-chairs through all doorways. Given adequate help, we could stay here till the Lord takes us home. We don't know the future, but we know the One who holds our future. We can still say, "Eben-ezer" – Hitherto has the Lord helped us.<sup>69</sup>



*Picture taken for our 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays*

---

<sup>69</sup> I Samuel 7:12

-o0o-

Even when we failed, He has kept and enabled us by His indwelling Spirit and has been faithful in guiding and providing for every need. We can echo the verse in one of the metrical versions of Psalm 23:

*Perverse and foolish oft I strayed  
But yet in love He sought me  
And on His shoulder gently laid  
And home, rejoicing, brought me.*

We are thankful for the assurance that His promises are true. Now we can look forward that one day we shall dwell in His Presence for ever.

*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NIV) Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. (II Cor. 9:15)*