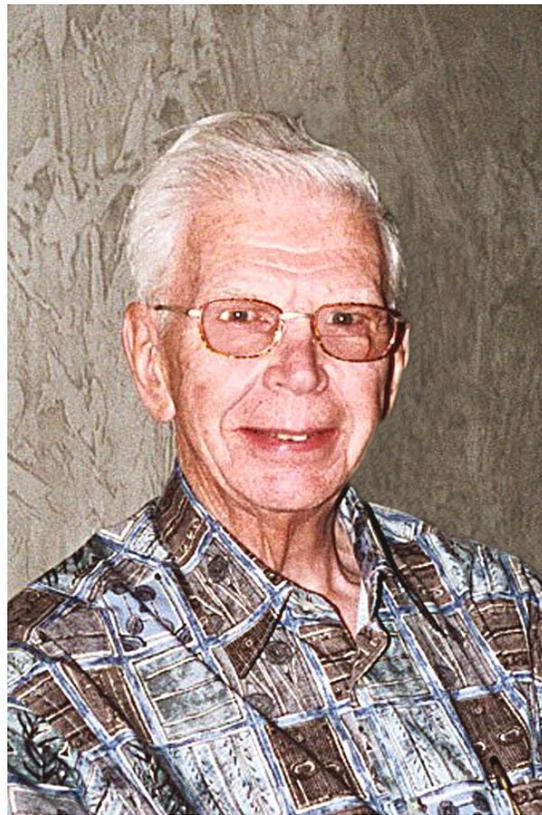


My Life Story



Cyril Vermooten



Nan Quorollo, Storykeeper

Acknowledgements

The Ethnic Life Stories Project continues to emulate the vibrant diversity of the Springfield community. So much is owed to the many individuals from Drury University-Diversity Center, Southwest Missouri State University, Forest Institute, Springfield Public School System, Springfield/Greene County Libraries, and Southwest Missouri Office on Aging who bestowed their talents, their words of encouragement, their generosity of time and contributions in support of this unique opportunity to enrich our community.

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Jim Mauldin

Ethnic Life Stories Project Coordinator.

The Ethnic Life Stories Project....

-giving the Springfield community a window to its diversity through the life stories of ethnic elders.

Liewe Se Storie Afrikaanse	Afrikaanse (2)
ŌSŌ GAY HÄY WŌ TAN	Apache
قصص من الحياة	Arabic (2)
Ga-no-du Ka-ne-he-lv-s-gi	Cherokee
自傳	Chinese (2)
Life Stories	English
Histoires De Ma Vie	French
Mayer rah-Khaan Knee-Hindi	Hindi
生きてきた道	Japanese
나의 살아온 이야기	Korean
ഇവിത കഥകൾ	Malayalam
Povestea Vie Ţii Mele	Romanian
La Historia de la Vida	Spanish (4)
Kuwento Ng Aking Buhay	Tagalog
געשיחטע פון מאן לעבען	Yiddish

Birthplaces of the Storytellers

Class of 2001

Yohannan Abraham
Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India

Janet Akaike - Toste
Kofu, Japan

Martha Baker
San Antonio, Texas

Grace Ballenger
Shanghai, China

Olga Codutti
Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina

Taj Farouki
Wadi-Hunayn, Palestine

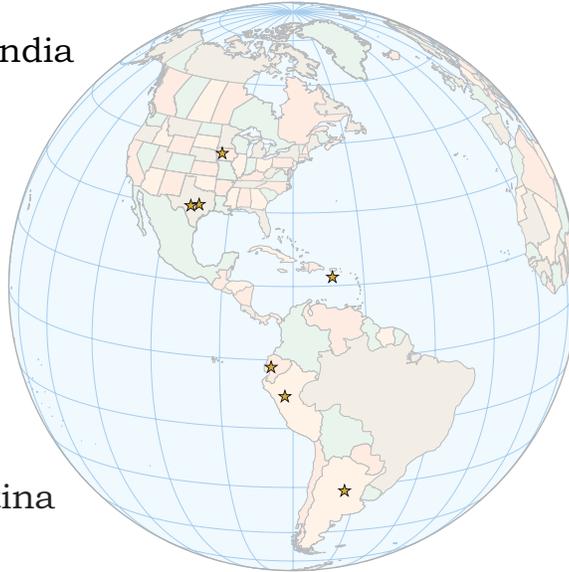
John Hernandez
San Antonio, Texas

Yung Hwang
Okjong, Kyungnam, Korea

Hyman Lotven
Kapulah, Russia

Regina Lotven
Nancy, France

Sterling Macer
Mason City, Iowa



Class of 2002

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Edgar Galinanes
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

Edward P. Ksara
Tangier, Morocco

Ioana Popescu
Bucharest, Romania

Josefina S. Raborar
Manila, Philippines

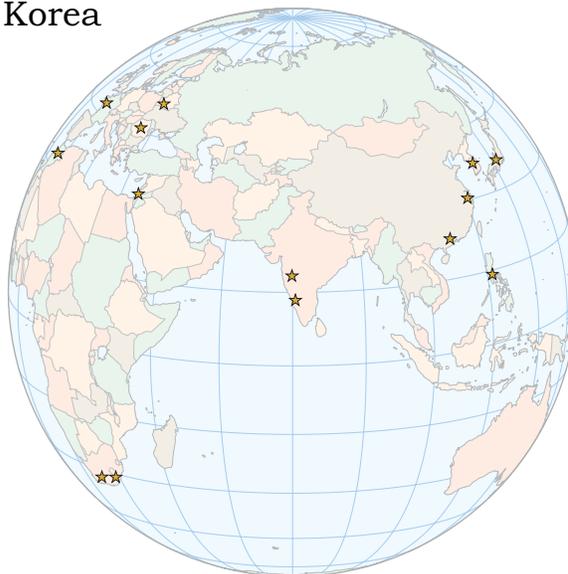
Juan Salazar
Tuman, Peru

Ruth Penaherrera-Norton
Archidona, Ecuador

Cyril Vermooten
Beaufort West, South Africa

Joy Vermooten
Nqaberie (Natal), South Africa

Tobby Yen
Chung (Zhongshan), China





Tsumeb

Windhoek

NAMIBIA

Keetmanshoop

Cape Town

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Livingstone

Maun

Francistown

BOTSWANA

Gaborone

Upington

Kimberley

Bloemfontein

De Aar

SOUTH AFRICA

Beaufort West

Oudtshoorn

Bisho

Port Elizabeth

Umtata

East London

INDIAN OCEAN

ZIMBABWE

Bulawayo

Pretoria

Johannesburg

Mmabatho

Soweto

SWAZILAND

Mbabane

Maputo

MOZAMBIQUE

Limpopo

Tugela

Vaal

Molopo

Okavango

Lake Kariba

Victoria Falls

Cyril Vermooten
Beaufort West, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Cyril Vermooten is a man of vision and faith. As a microbiologist, he has been called upon by many South African companies to solve industrial problems. As a father and husband, he has lovingly cared and provided for his family. One of Cyril's greatest sources of pride is his most recent endeavor "Living Free", a faith-guided approach to help individuals set goals for their later years. Cyril has positively influenced many, many people during his lifetime. I count his friendship and the hours we shared in storytelling as a joy in my life.

**Nan Qurollo
May 2002**

Cyril Vermooten unexpectedly passed away in September. This is truly a loss for all who knew him. It is my hope that Cyril's story will serve as a tribute to his life and work.

*Nan Qurollo
October 2002*

- Chapter One: FAMILY HISTORY
Cyril Arnold Loyd Vermooten
Area History
My Parents and Brother
- Chapter Two: EARLIEST MEMORIES AND CHILDHOOD
- Chapter Three: TEEN YEARS
Celebrations
- Chapter Four: ADULTHOOD
Marriage and Family
- Chapter Five: LIFE MISSION
- Chapter Six: SPRINGFIELD EXPERIENCE
- Chapter Seven: FINAL THOUGHTS

CHAPTER ONE: FAMILY HISTORY

Cyril Arnold Loyd Vermooten

I have many names in my given name. Lawrence, my brother, was christened straight off with one name when he was born. When I came I was given three. I've used all three names. "Loyd" is of our family heritage, so the family always called me Loyd. My friends called me Cyril, and at church they called me Arnold. My mother's maiden name was Bands, but the original family name was Loyd. They came over to South Africa from Wales in 1820. Vermooten is a Dutch name but it used to be French. Vermootens used to be the rulers from the south of France. The coat of arms has the three crosses which represent the French in the third crusade to Jerusalem. The third crusade was the royal crusade. When the French revolution started, royalty were beheaded but some escaped to Holland and camouflaged the name so that they couldn't be traced. The name was changed to Vermooten.



I was born July 3, 1929, in a hospital at Beaufortwest, Cape, South Africa. The family doctor delivered me. My birth was normal, but not so my brother's. He had a very weak heart and they did not expect him to live. Later on he got rheumatic fever which was quite dangerous in those days. He spent quite some time in the hospital during his life as well. He is four and a half years older than I.



Mother

Area History

The part of South Africa in which I grew up was rural. Two languages were spoken, English and Afrikaanse. We had a Dutch name but we were English speaking. One of the things I remember was pulling down the flag and saluting it. It consisted of orange, white, and blue stripes. In the middle white stripe were three small flags--the Union Jack (British), the Transvaal, and the Free State (also orange, white and blue for the House of Orange). Gold was discovered in the Transvaal and that eventually led to the Boer War. The British decided the wealth was theirs and they wanted it enough to go to war. The English dressed in bright colors, reds and all that, so you could see them coming from miles away. The Boers (Dutch) had developed the color khaki as a camouflage color and in the country you couldn't see them. The Boers only needed a few men to pop off the British. The war, which should only have lasted six months, lasted four years. Winston Churchill was captured at Mafikeng. The British eventually conquered the Boers. Badenpowell was also captured. (He founded the Boy Scouts.) The year 1910 saw the formation of the different provinces that became the Union of South Africa. Three of the leaders of the country were General Botha, General Hertzog, and General Smuts. The 31st of May is Union Day. That stayed with us until the early 60s when the country became a

republic. We broke away from England and became a complete republic in much the same way the U.S. did from England.

There were ten native languages in South Africa. Each tribe hated the other tribe, so there was no union among the Africans. The strongest and biggest tribe was the Zulus, a war-like nation. Dingaan was the chief. The Zulus were very cruel and used to wipe out a lot of their enemies. At one time, the Afrikaanse Trekkers were coming out from Durban and got near Vryheid. They set up camp with all their wagons in a circle. Dingaan invited them to come to a feast. So the leaders of the Trekkers went along and were persuaded to leave their guns with their horses. They came in, the Zulus were dancing, and all of a sudden the Trekkers noticed that buried under the ground were all the spears. The leaders of the Trekkers were killed. The camp of the Trekkers was right next to a river and the Zulus came over in the thousands and attacked with spears. The Trekkers used guns. The river flowed red with blood. It was called the Battle of Blood River. The Trekkers prayed that if the Lord gave them victory they would remember the day and keep it as a holiday thereafter. The day they won the battle was the 16th of December and it is known as Dingaan's Day.

The area in which I lived, Cape Province, did not really have any tribes. The black people who came down and lived in this area mainly spoke Afrikaanse. There were lots of "colored" people (a mixture of many races) in this area.

The climate was dry in Beaufortwest and surrounding Worster and Cerus, being a very low rainfall area. It was hilly with mountains nearby. The whole country has low, green, nutritious bushes which make the area good for sheep farming. Beaufortwest was the hub of the sheep farming community. The winter months, June, July, and August, had days which were sunny most of the time but the nights got cool with occasional frost. Our water taps in the gardens never froze. Coal stoves and oil or electric heaters heated the homes. The houses in South Africa are double-walled brick with a hollow in between as insulation. All the walls inside are one layer of brick and the roofs are tiled or covered with corrugated sheets of iron. Most of the homes were single storied.

A lot of people in South Africa were farmers but a great many also worked in the mining industries. There are big mines including coal, iron ore, copper, diamonds, gold, platinum, semi-precious stones, and various other minerals. Mainly the men worked while the women stayed home with the children. Most families had cars but there were also buses and trains. Later came aircraft.

My Parents and Brother

My father, Christiaan, was a tall man, just over six feet. On his hand when he made a fist one of his knuckles was missing. The bone was shot out during the First World War in a battle in France but it didn't affect his hand at all. He was a mechanical engineer technician involved in rail communication. My mother Caroline was about 5'8". She



Cyril with parents

loved music and played the piano. My dad was involved in the Anglican Church; he was a churchwarden. He had brown hair and blue eyes. My mother had dark brown hair, but I don't recall the color of her eyes. She had one sister (I don't recall her name) who was a schoolteacher near the Queenstown area. Their father was a lawyer in Christiana close to where diamonds were mined at Kimberley. My mother was born in Queenstown but she lived more in Christiana. She had a brother (I don't recall his name) who was also in the practice of law in Christiana. My father had a sister who lived at Cerus on a farm and two brothers, Matt in Port Elizabeth and Dirk in Johannesburg. I saw my aunts and uncles fairly often, but mostly my aunt in Cerus.

My father wasn't a strict father. My mother was gentle and liked to sing. She liked classical music. She died of abdominal cancer when I was fourteen and my father died of lung cancer in his late 70s. He was quite a smoker and it caught up with him eventually. My father remarried when I was just about finished with high school. There were almost 30 years difference in their ages. She passed away when she was in her 60s. They had a son Nigel. He and I met when I used to go to Cape Town on business and I would take him and his wife to dinner. We got on very well. Nigel died and his wife Zandra remarried. She told me that the worst thing about remarrying was not being able to keep the name Vermooten. Our paths continue to cross every now and again.

My brother Lawrence died in the 80s from heart complications in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He had just retired and was a little over 60 years of age. His wife's name is Pearl and she is still living. They had two children, a daughter Annette and a son Jeffrey. Annette did her degree in chemistry and has been lecturing in Port Elizabeth University. She is now a counselor on the city council. Jeffrey is in East London and is in the fire department.



Lawrence and Cyril

I have always felt close to my brother. He used to encourage me quite a lot and he was always there for me. When I left home, he was the one who kept in contact. It was difficult when he passed away. We lived in the same house most of my childhood. After Beaufortwest we moved near Worcester and then to Port Elizabeth. I also went to school at Cradock. At school I stuttered badly and was extremely shy. When I needed to speak, I would kick the calf of my leg to get the first word out.

CHAPTER TWO: EARLIEST MEMORIS AND CHILDHOOD

I had no nicknames. The kids called me Cyril. At home for me a normal day was waking up and then being in a rush. I was trying to get dressed, have a quick breakfast, and then walk to school which was about a mile away. My breakfast was porridge, fruit, and a cup of coffee. The coffee began when I was about eleven. I always liked to get to school before time to play with my friends. We used to love watching the ants and all the things that they did. We would put barricades in front of their paths. My brother and I played household games because he wasn't very active. In the evenings after the meal, most of the kids would get together on the corner of the road under the street lamp and play hopscotch, etc. We had no television, but did have radios with excellent stories so you actually pictured the whole scene.



Cyril

My father taught me to play rugby. He had played only a little but he knew the game and the rules and how to teach me. Rugby is much rougher than football. It was a very satisfying game and I really enjoyed it. South Africans have been the world leaders in rugby for quite a number of years. The big toss-up used to be between New Zealand and South Africa but in recent years it has been between Australia and South Africa.

In my earlier school years there were two grades together in a classroom. You would be taught and then while the other group was being taught, you had written work to do. When you got higher, there were individual grades. We called them Standards. At age six you were in sub A and then sub B and then you went to Standard 1. That went through to Standard 5 and then high school started with Standard 6 to Standard 10. Now the schools are in grades.

My math teacher was a favorite. I was always good in math and he would say to me, "You can be what you want to be." He's about the only teacher I remember. This was about Standard 8. I brought my lunch from home and ate at school. My lunch was a sandwich of marmite. Marmite is a vitamin B fortified spread with a salty taste to it. Another sandwich we would have is cheese and jam. We used whole wheat bread. I didn't drink much milk; I didn't like it except in things like ice cream. School started at eight a.m. and ran until two in the afternoon. After school there were sports at the school grounds. Some days we stayed at school for the sports and other days we went home first and then came back. It all depended on how much time we had.

Our school year was different from here. Our longest holiday was the summer break which was at Christmas time, from Dec. 6th until the 12th of January. The next break was at Easter with a two-week break. Then we would go into the winter with a month's break at the end of June into July. We would return to school the first of August and go to October and just have a week's break to prepare for the final exams of the year in November. I didn't have a great deal of homework. I probably had less than my kids had (unless I just didn't do it!) I didn't have many chores because I got home late from sports. I would play cards with family and friends. My friends and I would also make slingshots with the v-shaped bottom made out of wood and an elastic sling to shoot the stone and hit the birds or the rabbits. I wasn't very good. I would miss more than I would hit. We would also play a lot of checkers.

One of the biggest memories I have as a child is springtime in September. Just before September the rains came and all the wild flowers would come out. If you travel 300 miles inland from Cape Town, you get to Beaufortwest where wildflowers are all along the mountain roads. All up the west coast you see daisies and other pockets of colors. One of the things I used to love doing as a kid was going up into the hills and picking the wildflowers, bringing them to my mom. In those days you were allowed to pick them. Later they brought in restrictions and you were not allowed to pick the wild flowers.

One of the highlights I remember growing up was the Sunday school picnic. We used to go by train for about 15 miles and then get out at a little siding where there were lots of trees and a little stream. It was an ideal place for picnics. I remember splashing around in fresh running water.

My mom prepared mainly western foods—breads, chicken, and beef, but we ate a lot of Karoo mutton. This mutton had a different flavor because of the area where the sheep were raised. I still love mutton.

On Sundays we would get up not too early and go to the Anglican Church and then come home and have a big Sunday dinner. In the afternoon my mom would often play the piano and sing or we would walk to visit friends. Sunday dinner mainly consisted of roast chicken. For dessert there was custard and fruit. There were evening services at church and my parents would go, but as small children we did not. As my brother and I got bigger, though, we joined our parents in the evening services. When mom and dad went out and left us, we had a babysitter who was also the servant in the house. The servant helped my mother cook and clean as well as do some laundry. She was a “colored” woman. I considered her old but I imagine she was actually young. When we moved to Port Elizabeth we lived in a suite in a hotel.

My first home had a metal roof and was probably average in size. My brother and I had our own bedrooms. He had a bigger room than I had because he was ill and needed more space. We had a spare room as well. The home was in a suburb with people living nearby. We had pavements (sidewalks) through the suburb. I liked the living area the most because usually my mom or dad was there. It was small and comfortable with a fireplace. I don’t remember any set rules except to behave ourselves with no shouting or messing around. I got some spankings. I had boundaries where I could play. I had to keep my room clean and make my bed in the morning. Our backyard was fenced. We had a swing that hung from a tree limb and I would swing high. I pushed my brother more than he pushed me because he was ill.

Going to the hospital to have my tonsils removed was not something that made me happy. I remember the nurse asking me if I had ever had a bee sting. I told her no and she explained she was going to give me an injection that was like a bee sting. In those days they used chloroform to put you to sleep and it was terrible. That is the only operation I have ever had. I was never scared of going to the dentist. Even today I just relax in the chair and never ask for an injection. The injection was worse than the drilling. I tell the dentist to just drill.

I used to play with grass snakes as a child, but there were some that I was scared of. I remember one time I put a snake in a bottle and left the lid off so it could get some air. Our

servant came into the pantry and saw this hissing snake and was frightened. I got into trouble for that! South Africa has the cobra. I would come across it every now and again. You had to be careful. The black mambas and the green mambas were the bad ones. They were very long and very fast. You used to see them in the trees, especially in Zulu land. Someone would tell you to watch it while they went to get a gun. By the time they got the gun and you were watching it all the time it would suddenly just vanish. We also used to get the boomslang tree snake. After it bit it had to open its mouth as its fangs were at the back of the mouth, so you usually had time to shake it off before it could shift to the fangs at the back. We also had some spiders. There was one spider that would always run for the shade. If you were in a room and crossed a shadow, it would run straight for you. Of course it wasn't running for you, just your shadow. When you changed positions it would run for you (your shadow) again. It was quite a harmless spider. We also had the flat spider. Its body was the size of a quarter and the legs were very long. It stayed on the ceilings. I remember a time when my wife Joy had sprayed the ceilings with a poison and while she was bathing one evening a flat spider came along the bathroom ceiling, hit the poison, and fell into her bath. Joy hopped right out!

Our homes were not air conditioned; we just opened windows. Some of the windows had screens and some did not. In South Africa, you position your house a certain way to the northeast regardless of the position of your piece of ground. Our house had a south entrance, but you want nothing to face south as that is the cold side. Therefore you face everything due north or northeast. When you position the house due north, in the summer when the sun is high and shines straight down you get shade around the house. In the winter the sun is low so it pours in the windows, which were very low and went up the wall. I did not have this as a child as it was only later that they discovered this way of positioning houses. I did have it for my family however.

South Africa was a good place to grow up. One thing we learned as a youngster was to mix with all different races. Our parents always instilled in us that regardless of what color people are, they're equal to us. Right through life I had friends of different colors. There was cross-cultural communication between people. I was very grateful for this.

CHAPTER THREE: TEEN YEARS

High school was enjoyable for me. The subjects I was interested in were math, engineering, and drawing. The high school was a separate building from the elementary school. I walked to school. Dating in high school wasn't taboo, but it wasn't encouraged either. I don't remember particularly having a girlfriend. We didn't have dances at the school when I was growing up, but the private schools did.

I had some good friends as a teenager. William was my best friend and we would do a lot of things together, like projects and activities after school. We liked to get out into the wild and see what was going on and what we could learn from it. We used to do a lot of camping together along with a couple of others. I was also in the Scouts and went fairly high with arms full of badges. My brother did a bit of Scouting but more in the leadership area. He wasn't strong enough to get out and rough it. My other friend was Bart. He was a good buddy.

When I was near the end of schooling I got a job at General Motors in the assembly plant. I worked holidays there including the Christmas holiday, and that was a good experience. My job was towards the completion of the car, putting on finishing touches. My friends worked there also. It was a good opportunity to get out into the marketplace and it provided money for Christmas. I don't remember how many pounds we were paid, but at the time I thought it was pretty good. Chevys and then Buicks were made there.

My friends and I used to go to the movies quite a bit. All the movies were black and white. There were a lot of westerns and a lot of movies from the United Kingdom. It wasn't a big movie house, just a hall where they showed the films. I have lost touch with my friends. I never went back for a school reunion as reunions weren't that popular.

I did drive as a teenager with my dad or my brother. We couldn't get a license until we were 18. My father taught me to drive. My mother did not drive. My brother wrecked the car once. It went into a gravel skid and rolled. Our dad was in the car at the time but no one was hurt, just damaged the car.

The book in my teens that left the biggest impression on me was Pilgrim's Progress. I also loved The Swiss Family Robinson. I was not an avid reader. My parents did read to me.

My math teacher was the person who shaped me as a teenager. He was always open and one could go to him at any time with any simple problem to solve. He would show it to you and not make you feel stupid for asking. We were friends as well as student and teacher. I could talk to him as a friend. He was the only one I had like this. Of course with teachers you were always scared of getting caned. They were allowed to cane us with a pliable cane in the classroom anywhere they could get hold of you. I was caned, not often, but it did happen.

Celebrations

Christmas was always very important in our home. We would open all of our Christmas presents early Christmas morning and then we would go to church, which was packed out on

Christmas Day. We would come home and have a big dinner and then have friends in or go to their home. At the end of it all we would have plum pudding, a very rich fruit pudding cut in small slices. In our money we had a very small coin called a tickey (worth 3 pennies). These would be put in the pudding and as a kid we always looked for them to see how many we could get. I still have a number of them from plum puddings. I have kept them because they don't exist anymore in the South African money. I suppose I have about thirty of them.

Another big day was Guy Fawkes Day. Guy Fawkes was a fellow in England who wanted to burn down parliament. He set a lot of crackers (firecrackers) off in parliament but it didn't amount to much. Guy Fawkes Day occurs on the 5th of November. I remember when I was eight years old and had just returned from Cape Town where I had had my tonsils out, my dad brought me a big box of fireworks and I enjoyed setting them off. There were also public displays of fireworks, but not as big as the Fourth of July.

Easter was always very important because it was a long weekend, Friday through Monday, four days. If you were living inland, it was a good time to get to the coast before winter set in. Therefore, on Easter the roads were always very busy. The Anglicans had services on Good Friday and on Sunday. Children didn't dye eggs, but we would have Easter egg hunts and get lots of chocolates.

Dingaan's Day on the 16th of December was also celebrated. This was the beginning of the summer holidays. All the factories would close until just after Christmas, about two weeks. My father had to work during this time as he had ordinary holidays.

Birthdays were a big celebration at our house. My mother would make a cake and I would have a party. We played games like hopscotch.

CHAPTER FOUR: ADULTHOOD

At eighteen when I finished schooling I left home and went to Durban. I wasn't quite certain what I was going to do, but I was offered a position in Durban to do clerical work and I did that for a couple of years. During this time I was also very much involved in St. Johns which is similar to the Red Cross. There was a big movement of that up in Durban. When I went to Durban, I met a family named the Nutmans and they befriended me. They were members of St. Paul's Church and I went to early service with them. They were quite keen on fishing, so we went to the harbor and out in the boat to do some fishing and boating. I initially had a room in a boarding house and then took a room at the YMCA.



Cyril with St. Johns

At this same time there was an uprising between the Zulus and the Indians (those individuals from the country of India). The Indians were very shrewd business people. The province of Natal has the highest population of Indians anywhere in the world outside of India. There was an uprising because the Zulus said the Indians were cheating them. The Indians told the Zulus they would supply things and the Zulus gave them money, but the Indians supplied them with nothing. The Zulus beat up the Indians and many were injured in the whole process. With St. Johns I went to King Edward Hospital, in Durban, and was involved with the outpatients, stitching up the wounded and otherwise treating them. I had been trained by St. Johns to do this sort of thing. The skirmish went on for a couple of weeks and then quieted down.

I realized that clerical work wasn't really for me. I was always interested in chemistry and doing some type of research work. I met the Director of Pathology in Durban and he got me into the laboratories where I started to train in microbiology and biochemistry. Those I took as my majors. After that I was thinking more and more that I wanted to do more research/laboratory work but didn't know what line. Then I met the person in charge of medical research work. He had just come from the UK and was heading up the whole department in Natal. He said they would have something for me—parasitology and microbiology. I thought, this is really what I want to do. I gave notice to leave the clerical work and went to Natal College to study parasitology, microbiology, and biochemistry, a four-year course. I specialized in microbiology and biochemistry. My degree is a Fellowship Diploma. During the time I was there, I did a lot of fieldwork as well in parasitology, especially with amoebic dysentery. I was learning where the contaminations were coming in and where the people were contracting it. One day I was talking to the professor and told him to have a look at a slide. He looked at it and confirmed it was amoebic dysentery. "Yes, but this is mine!" I told him. I had picked it up in my fieldwork and became very thin and almost looked like those people who came from the concentration camps in Germany. I was put into the hospital, treated for it, and cured.

When I qualified, the Director of Pathology for Natal asked if I would like to go to Eshowe as they wanted to open up a new laboratory in that part of Zulu land. While at Eshowe, there was quite a big outbreak of food poisoning, salmonella and shigella. I did the classification of the different bacteria and there was one I couldn't place at all. The International Laboratory classified it as a new one and called it salmonella Eshowe after the town where it was

discovered. Then there was a terrific outbreak of diphtheria and I was very much involved with that as well, trying to work out what we could do to eliminate its spread.

It was during the time in Eshowe that I met my wife, Joy. I was about 22 years of age. I was also dating a girl named Rosemary from the UK, but chose Joy. Joy was a year older than I and was doing her studies to be a registered nurse. She had done nursery work in England with children from birth to seven years. Joy's sister introduced us as I was boarding with her in Eshowe. Shortly after that I returned to Durban and worked at King Edward Hospital doing quite a bit of research with gonococcus. I was in Durban for a year before Joy and I were married. We remained there about a year. From there we went to Pretoria where a microbiological section was being developed at the Bureau of Standards. I was asked to head up one section of that. Joy did private duty nursing in Pretoria until our son was born and she then stayed home.

Medical research asked me if I would open up a laboratory in northern Free State in Kroonstad. Kroonstad was the largest town in the area. Nearby in the Welkom area they discovered very rich gold mines and that area really developed rapidly. There were many workers there for all the gold mines and it became quite a key point. I was at Kroonstad for about three years. When I got this laboratory going, people approached me from Vanderbijlpark. Vanderbijlpark area was developed at the beginning of WWII, 1939, when South Africa went to war. They found that they needed more steel mills. They had a steel mill at Pretoria, but Vanderbijlpark was close to coal mines and to a river for needed energy. Dr. Vanderbijl in the States had developed a lot of the vacuum valve tube technology used in radios. General Smuts went over to the US to see him and told him he was needed by South Africa and asked him to come back. Dr. Vanderbijl did return and headed up the steel mill. Roosevelt was the US president and he arranged the sending of a quantity of steel out to South Africa to use for armament for the war.

When Vanderbijlpark was laid out, all the streets were in circles so water would flow clockwise. The whole town was developed from scratch. They had a small steel mill erected there and planned the town for at least 80,000 people. They had all the boulevards planned to separate the town as it developed. Those would be the main feeder roads and the town would be developed from that. The steel mill started to develop and expand. After the war in the 40s, the officials said everything for the town needed to be put underground, phone and electric lines, etc. The town is still around 80,000 people. When I went to Vanderbijlpark in the early 50s the steel mill was still growing very rapidly. It is still in operation and exports a lot of steel to the Far East. I was there about 28 years.

It was a very interesting area. It was called the Val Triangle and consisted of Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg (which was in the Free State), and Vereeniging. The mill in Vanderbijlpark made the steel and products would be finished off in Vereeniging. There were places that made metal boxes, cans, and that type of thing. In Sasolburg was a big chemical industry where gasoline was also produced from a very low grade of coal that did not have many uses. Most of this technology was a product of the war. The Germans had developed the rudiments of producing gasoline from



Cyril in the lab

coal and the South Africans advanced the whole technology. Later on in the 70s when there was an embargo against the States by the Arab countries, the States would come to South Africa quite a bit. We would receive trainloads of coal from Virginia, which we tested to see if it could be used, but the quality of this coal was too good. We found an appropriate coal in North Dakota. The engineers from Sasolburg went to South Dakota and helped them develop the plant and the technology.

In the 60s and 70s the steel mill more than doubled in size. It was quite a big one. Immigrants were coming from all over the world to work there. In the school there were people from 56 different countries, including the States. English was the main language spoken. Housing became a problem so a house was developed which was made of concrete. It had walls already set with doorframes, windows, and electric wires. All they had to do was hang the solid walls and put the roof on, completing the house within one week. These houses are still standing.

In the 60s I became a Rotarian and was very active around South Africa, and I was doing some research work for a couple of medical companies. Joy and I wanted to do more with our children. We built a sailboat and kept it at Loch Vaal. At Loch Vaal there was a wall in the Vaal River forming a loch and a very big strip of water. It became a popular boating and yachting club. Our sailboat was a small one but it held our family of five. We would spend weekends there at our cottage. At this time I was asked to become chairman of the boating club, which I was for about four years. I negotiated with the people who did all the water affairs in order to keep our boating club going. I worked on developing races in the area and ended up having international speed boat races there.

During my time as an industrial microbiologist at Vanderbijlpark, a problem developed in the making of the steel. As the steel is rolled to get it down to a very thin level, it goes through the rollers and the rollers have to be kept oiled to keep it moving properly. A mixture of oil and water is used. This makes the ideal food for bacteria which eat the hydrocarbons from the oil. Once the hydrocarbons are broken down, the property of the oil to keep the rollers moving smoothly is lost. It becomes mainly a water solution and it is impossible to roll the steel smoothly. A bounce type effect would take place which meant the steel would have to be resmelted and rolled again. To solve this, one had to look for something that would keep the bacteria from multiplying and not affect the oil. At the time I was doing more medical work. One of the engineers from the steel mill happened to talk to my employer and asked if they knew someone who could help solve this problem. I was then introduced to them, started to have a look at the problem, and solved it for them. One of the things that they do in the steel mill is temper it by spraying it with water. They used to just bring the water out of the river and spray it. When the steel cooled down, there were little speckles and they didn't know what they were. We discovered the water was quite high in bacteria and the



The family at Vanderbijlpark

bacteria were incinerated in the steel making process, leaving the chemical composition on the steel causing rust. It was known as speckled rust.

At the beginning of 1975 the senior engineer of ISCOR told me I had been invited to go to Rhode Island, USA. I also began to correspond with a professor at the University of Houston and one in Detroit at Wayne State University. I was doing research on industrial microbiology. I was doing a lot of work with many companies and was getting known by the petroleum companies of Shell, Texaco, and Castrol. In July 1975 the time had come for me to go to Rhode Island, Houston, U.K., and Europe. A medical company had published a paper of mine in an international journal and they paid me for it. The airfare was pretty cheap and covered Joy's airfare from Johannesburg to London and back on an eight-day ticket. I traveled to Brazil first and then to New York. I was at the airport and the manager of Varig Airlines upgraded me to first class. He asked what I was trying to do and how much money Joy and I had. He then offered to fly Joy to Rio for a weekend of sight seeing. Then we went to New York, Orlando, Canada, the U.K. and home for a few hundred more. The children were at home with Joy's mother. We were gone about six weeks. It was a good time to go to the States as our money was quite strong—about \$1.30 to the rand.

When I was talking to Professor Bennet in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Houston, he told me he would love to come to South Africa. He said he would have no trouble paying the airfare to South Africa if I could organize a company that would take him and his wife around the country. When I returned to South Africa, I spoke to Castrol Oil and they jumped at the opportunity of sponsoring him to lecture at Castrol sites. They asked if Joy and I would join Professor Bennet and his wife on this tour. They did come to South Africa and we went to all the industries around the reef area. We took him down a gold mine that is 6000 feet above sea level and the gold they mine is 400 feet below sea level, a long, long way down. The engineers doing deep mining in South Africa are the leaders in the world. We went to Natal and up to one of the Zulu places where he could see some of the Zulu dancing. From there we went to Port Elizabeth for work there and then lectured in Cape Town. In Cape Town they put us on the Blue Train, a luxury train, which runs from Cape Town to Johannesburg, taking 24 hours for the trip. When you go to the dining car, your beds are made up for you with goodnight chocolates on the pillow. Professor Bennet returned to Houston from Johannesburg.



Cyril with Dr. Bennet

In 1975 I still worked at the steel mill, but the steel mill said we don't have a position for you any longer because we are an engineering place, not a research place. They more or less told me I had reached my peak and could only look forward to a pension. About this time, the refinery at Sasolburg came to me and said that they were having problems with jet fuel. I helped them by isolating the bacteria that attacked the aluminum tanks in aircraft. They then told me they needed me and asked if I would come and be a consultant microbiologist for them. I told Joy it sounded good, but I had become comfortable with the steel industry and didn't know much about the refinery industry. I asked the children how they felt about this and they were positive about the change providing we kept our home. I wasn't very sure about this and it became a matter of prayer. A cousin of mine who is a senior high court judge told me it was a chance of a lifetime.

I met with the Board of Directors of the Natref Company in Sasolburg and presented the figures of how much it would cost them to set up a good laboratory—almost a million dollars. They confirmed that they needed me and offered an engineer to work with me and supplied the laboratory I needed. I took the position and this began to open up doors for me very rapidly. I was working on jet fuel and knew what I needed to do to satisfy the aircraft for international flights. I was working with Boeing and Air Bus in France.

Saldanha Bay was a natural bay being developed into a deep-sea super tanker harbor. These crude oil tanks and their problems became my new focus. Three-inch thick steel was on the floor of the tanks but still a little trickle of crude came out. We would go into look at it and there would be pitting corrosion from the bacteria. This became a new area for me altogether. They had also had abandoned mines which they would flood, work out where it leaked, and seal it up with concrete. Then they would fill the mines with crude oil with a layer of water at the bottom. If any water was lost it could be pumped out. I had to check and stabilize these.

We then started looking at the new tanks we were going to put in at Saldanha Bay. These had to be half buried. The whole concern of the tanks was their location in an area of the country where there were tremors. You had to have something to stand up to such conditions. They devised a tank that would look like an egg. We had the earth excavated to the shape of an egg, put down sand, and had Gundel Plastics put down a layer of plastic over the sand. We then told the civil engineers to pour concrete on top of that. This was a completely new thing. If there was a leak, because bacteria can attack concrete, we would be able to catch the leak in the plastic, suck it back, and put it back into the tank. We finished the whole tank, put chemicals into it to stop the growth of bacteria and fungi, and then from the ocean brought in seawater and flooded the whole tank. We then put in a boat and went around in the boat examining everything. When we determined that everything was fine, we emptied all the seawater out. They then brought the supertankers to fill it up with crude oil. We built five of these tanks that held an extremely large amount of fuel. The rest of the world asked the Arab countries why they sold oil to South Africa. They responded that South Africa had so much oil they could sell it back to them. We were stockpiling the oil. This was in the 70s and 80s and things were really going well.

The sugar industry opened up with large exports from South Africa and I was asked to look at the problems they were experiencing. Different companies in Europe and UK asked me if I would work with them on projects. Dow Chemical asked me to be their consultant for South Africa. I was a consultant for the South African Air Force and responsible to the general concerning fuel issues and the design of tanks. The dean at Orlando University asked me to help with the fall-out from rockets and what affect it had on bacteria. I had made a good name for myself and had begun traveling every year, organizing these trips into a month or six weeks.

I then became interested in kelp and seaweed from mainly around the Atlantic Ocean side of Cape Town. We developed one of the chemicals used by the textile industry to provide a brilliant color. I began negotiating with people in Germany and Belgium who were interested in this process and encouraged me to “go for it.” The Germans had offered to pay one million dollars toward getting the process going. It was at this time that mainly the Americans placed the embargo against South Africa. The banks said you’re sitting on a gold mine and we’ll help

you. I was paying for all of the costs of the venture, but eventually my business folded because of the embargo and I went into voluntary liquidation. I lost everything, the company, our home, everything. Friends of ours by the name of Leggott asked us to come and stay with them. They said they had a townhouse they would share with us. We then went to friends in Pinetown. We looked after a home for about one month. We spent that time in prayer and asking the Lord what we had to do. Two things could happen: our whole life could be crushed and we could be bitter or we could be positive.

On returning from Bryanston we began to feel that the Lord was telling us to be motivated and to go out and motivate and train people to write a vision for their lives. We were excited, and our pastor was excited about our idea. His church was very big with a seating capacity of eighty-five hundred. A person there who did quite a bit of lecturing with companies provided me a secretary to help with the typing. She was a speed-reader, which is exactly what I needed. She would read a great deal of material for me and then summarize it. We developed a whole program and called it “**Living Free.**” Towards the end of 1990 we started our first series of lectures around the country. This opened up a new field. We did a couple of presentations in Europe and some in the United States. When we came to the States to live in 1998 we were not allowed to earn any money. We are in the process now of getting our green cards so that we can work to run the seminars and earn some money.



*Cyril teaching
Living Free*

We first spoke in Chicago with **Living Free** and did a lot of TV work there. I also went to a very large, upscale retirement home in Chicago and they asked me to speak to them, about 250 people. I also talked to a group of ladies who were in their 90s and challenged them to do something with their lives. Life does not end when you're 90. They needed to write and encourage people. They were so excited and we felt they would become “younger.” I then went to San Francisco where we were on radio and television and from there to Minneapolis to a large conference center.

A few things prompted us to move to the States. One, our daughter was in the States. Also, crime was becoming very prevalent in South Africa. When we traveled by road to Cape Town, it wasn't safe. We couldn't travel before the sun came up. When we came to a traffic light at night, Joy would look behind the car to see if anyone was coming from her side and I looked on my side. We were told to just run the red light if anything happened. When you parked your car, you locked it and put the gear in neutral and locked this into the gearbox. When we were living in Randburg in a very nice part of town Joy wanted to walk a fourth mile to her friends and I couldn't allow it. I made her take the car. If she had been attacked, no one would have come to her aid as they were all behind high walls for protection.

We came to Springfield, Missouri, because our daughter was living here, working as an RN and pursuing her Masters in Counseling. She asked us to come and stay with her. This was in 1998. Our sons and their families have been here to visit. We miss our boys and their families. We are waiting for our green cards.

In my career I don't believe I would change anything. It was very exciting. It was just the embargo of no exports or imports between South Africa and the United States that crushed it. It affected Texaco and the Ford plant. One company I really felt sorry for was Mobil, which had a very good refinery up in Durban, and they literally were forced to shut it down a couple of months before Mandella took over. This sort of thing did a lot of damage. When Bill Clinton was in South Africa he asked why there weren't American companies developing in the country. He was told it was because of the embargo.

In hindsight, the embargo gave me a new concept of life through **Living Free**. It gives you new insight into people and how to help people. I'm now looking at people with "how can I help you" and not "what can you do for me." When I was busy building up the business with kelp, I was trying to get people who had clout to help me. Now I have changed completely and am trying to help others.

Marriage and Family

Joy and I were married the 20th of March 1954. We were living in Durban. Joy had qualified as a registered nurse and was doing her midwifery training. I was a microbiologist doing research on gonococcus. We were married a hundred miles away from Durban on a mission station near the farm where Joy was born. All of our special friends traveled to the wedding. We had just over a hundred people at the wedding. Joy and I enjoyed every minute of our special day. Her brother and his wife gave us our reception. We went to Kokstad for a honeymoon in the mountains for one week and then returned to work in Durban.

Our first home was a small apartment near the beach and behind Addington Hospital in Durban. We lived in Durban for about 18 months and then moved to Pretoria where I worked for the Bureau of Standards. Joy did a bit of home nursing there, but when she became pregnant she stopped nursing.

Our first child was born on Friday the 13th in 1956. This was our son Ian Trevor. Joy, Ian and I remained in Pretoria for about three years. Graham Robin, our second son was born in Kroonstad where I had gone to do medical research. Graham was born on the 3rd of October 1958. I remained in Kroonstad for three years.

Our daughter Linda Joy was born on the 6th of March, 1960. We were living in Vanderbijlpark. Our first home there, on Faraday Boulevard, had three bedrooms, bathroom, large dining room-lounge, kitchen, and an outbuilding as well as a garage. Then we moved to our very own house on Toselli Street. That part of the town had streets all named after composers.



My wife Joy



Cyril, Joy and Ian

When Ian was born in an Afrikaanse hospital in Pretoria, the nurse asked what is the name of your son. Joy told her it was Ian. The nurse looked puzzled because in Afrikaanse Ian is the word for “one” and she wondered if the next child would be named “two!” Joy explained to the nurse that Ian is Scotch for John. We liked the name Ian Trevor, but Ian did not. At school his friends would call him “I TV.”



Ian, Linda and Graham

Our children were easy to raise for the most part. We used to do a lot of outings with the children. They all took part in sports. At a young age, they started to develop natural leadership ability. Ian went to Scripture Union, which is a leadership camp. Graham followed as did Linda. I was the superintendent at the Sunday school. Our Sunday school at the Baptist church grew and received many awards. We started the first adult Sunday school at the church. The children were fairly good students.

We lived at Vanderbijlpark until all three children graduated from high school. After graduation, Ian did personnel management training at Stewart and Lloyds. He developed as a personnel manager and began to train people in the work situation. Ian and his wife Ingrid (Inki) have four children: Kristen, the twins Justin and Chantelle, and Kyle. They now live in Port Elizabeth.



My whole family

After Graham graduated from high school, he went into the Air Force and stayed in for a number of years and completed several courses. He met his wife Diane at a Youth for Christ in Magaliesburg. They have two boys named Ryan and Shane. They live near Cape Town in Muizenburg.



Graham and Diane, Linda, Ingrid and Ian

After Linda graduated from high school she went into nursing and became an RN. She then became interested in Hospital Christian Fellowship and went to Holland. This was where all the international people went for this training. Linda came to the United States as a missionary with Hospital Christian Fellowship. She ran seminars and Bible study groups. After six years here she felt she needed further training. She went to Central Bible College for her BA. This was at the time Joy and I had liquidated and lost everything. Joy had prayed asking help for her children and said that God had reminded her that the children were His and He would supply their needs. Linda worked her way through CBC by being one of two nurses on campus. She went on to get a Master of Science in Counseling and a Master of Divinity at the Assemblies of God Seminary. She is now pursuing a PhD in Psychology at Forest Institute.

When all the children were gone, Joy remained at home enjoying her gardening. Joy has no fingerprints due to working in the soil so much. In South Africa we have a thumbprint on our driver's license. Joy has no thumbprint. She doesn't like to work in gloves because she can't feel the dirt.

CHAPTER FIVE: LIFE MISSION

My life mission began once we had lost everything and went to house sit for the month of December. We started to pray and really sought out what the Lord wanted us to do with our lives. We truly felt that the Lord wasn't finished with us. At the end of December 1990, I spoke to our pastor about my idea. It was vague in my own mind, but he thought the idea was phenomenal. The concept was that we would start training people from age 50 and up to really have a vision for their life. When people get to 50, the vision or dream part of their brain is rusted out. We want to get them dreaming again and then write a vision for what they want to do with the rest of their life. **Living Free** was born. I could have said I was



Living Free Seminar

liquidated and had nothing left, but it was the beginning of a new life. When I came to the States I met folks who had gone through a similar liquidation experience and had done nothing for ten years.

We started our first **Living Free** seminar in Randburg and it ran for eight weeks. We had quite a big group and they were so excited that we began meeting three times a week rather than the once a week we started with. We got them to start writing down the vision they wanted for their life. There was one couple who really felt they wanted to work with widows. She left her current position and began working with widows full time. He was a senior financial man with Total Petroleum Company with quite a number of years to go before retirement, so he worked on the widow vision part time. Just at that point Total said they were cutting back on staff and he became one of those let go. The others who were let go were in a spin and wondered what they were going to do. This man said, I have my vision with the widows and I can do this full time. People within the company noticed him and said this was amazing. We had one lady who was 85 and she got a vision to make things for people who didn't have much. Then we started doing camps, leaving Friday afternoon and going all day Saturday and Sunday. Those were tremendous times as during their time away the people started to grow closer to one another. We would have breaking of bread and I would ask when they received the wafer to break it in half, pick out someone in the group who you have gotten to know better during the weekend, tell them what they mean to you, and share the wafer with them. We had quite a few of the camps.

We had one individual who went through a mid-life crisis and was really going to pieces, but after prayer and a vision he came through it. Other people began asking if we had to limit it to mid-life so we opened **Living Free** to any adult. We had one couple with the man who worked in a managerial level at Standard Bank, one of the biggest in the country, and she was an occupational therapist. When I challenged them to determine a mission for their life, he responded that his job was only where he made money and was not his vision. His vision was to help the squatters. Squatters have no skills and little knowledge. The banker gave up his position and became a pastor to the squatters. He was very successful in helping them find a purpose to their lives and in forming church groups for them.



Cyril and Joy with one of Living Free groups

Ruth was completely paralyzed in her legs. She drove her car with all the controls at her hands. I asked her what she really wanted to do in life and she responded that she wanted to obtain a four-wheel drive vehicle. She explained that she was tired of people telling her about the wonderful views at the tops of mountains and she couldn't get there. Ruth did complete her vision! The whole thing is to see these people develop and blossom. One lass lost her husband and was left with almost nothing. She had two children still in school. After **Living Free** she felt the Lord was really opening up doors to her and she went down to Cape Town and got a very good position. She now has a vision.

Joy was my partner in this project. We would run the seminar for eight weeks, one evening per week for about three hours. At the end of the seminar we would encourage them to come to a camp where they could dream what they wanted to do and let that dream give birth to a vision. In 1993-94 I went to Chicago by invitation to do **Living Free** on television with a series of programs. This went off very well. After Chicago we went to San Francisco and did television and radio work. We did quite a bit of radio work here in Springfield as well. We continued to Minnesota



Cyril and Joy teaching Living Free

and went to a Lutheran campground, Mt. Carmel, and they were interested in the concept of **Living Free**. I now feel that we need to get to leaders. We need to give them the gospel, pray with them, encourage them, get them into the Word, and help them understand the Caleb Principle.

The Caleb Principle revolves around the children of Israel going towards the holy land. They camped out and Moses sent 12 spies into the country. Joshua and Caleb came back with good reports. The other ten spies came back with bad reports saying that the men looked like giants to them and they felt like locusts. These ten spies were locusts because it was their concept of themselves, so they were nothing. The Israelites wandered around for 40 years. Eventually Moses at age 120 climbed the mountain, died, and Joshua was put in charge. They fought for the land. The war came to a stalemate with giants in the country. Caleb told the other warriors to look at him because 45 years ago he came in as a spy and today he was 85 and as strong and keen as when he went in as a spy. He said he would take on the giants.

So the Caleb Principle is training people to be the best they can be at age 40--take people in at around age 28 and give them 12 years to train. The latest research shows that if you train people at that age they live longer with fewer diseases and become stronger. At 40 we would give them batches of test, put them under stress conditions, and test them mentally and this information would be put into a safe. At 40 they would have a camp for a week and we would then try to get them to have a mission for their life until they retire. They would write it down and it would be put in the safe with the other tests and be stored away until retirement. At retirement we would do a ten-day cruise, perhaps to Alaska, and challenge them, now that they have ended one portion of their life, to enter into a brand new era. It's not a case of just sitting down, but really having a mission for life. This would continue until they are 85. At age 85 the same thing would happen that did when they were 40--a battery of tests and a vision for the future. At 85 you need to be able to go out and lecture and show others that life is still good. This would continue until they died.

We would also challenge them to come into a work group and go to Africa and train people who have absolutely nothing and lift them up. Africans could be trained in English as a second language, hygiene, arithmetic, and finances to give them basic skills. We would ask the trainers to adopt a family and correspond with them via tapes whereby they could encourage and help their family in Africa. Our **Living Free** folks would be putting their lives into others who have nothing and see that "nothing" develop and blossom into something. This concept would also be implemented in the States where our **Living Free** trainers could go to families here with nothing.

Right now this vision is at the stage where I must make contacts with leaders in our community. During the past 3½ years I have spoken to adults who are from age 30 to retirement and have been challenging them regarding their mission. My audiences have been mainly in churches, but we need to get into other groups as well. This is why I want **Living Free** to expand. The more people we can bring in, the more groups we can get to. Others would become teachers/lecturers. We would need a fulltime secretary to help share the information with the leaders.

My personal goal is at 85 to do a hike of half a marathon--13 miles. I've never done that distance, but I feel I can because I regularly do five miles. I need to get someone to teach me to improve my walking skills. At 100, the plan is to have a big banquet and to get to the banquet you have to walk three miles. That's why I'm walking all the time, because it would be terrible if I'm having a banquet and I couldn't get to it! I am determined that at 100 I am going to be able to walk that distance. The whole thing is attitude and what you believe. I think the Lord enables you to fulfill that. Of course, all sorts of things can happen such as an accident, etc., but if you don't have an accident and you get to 100 and you haven't walked and prepared for it and you have a cane and are shaky like a leaf, you can't do it, and that shouldn't have been. The whole thing is to keep your body active. I want to instill in the people in **Living Free** that they have really got to start living and have a purpose for life and pass it on to others. A couple in **Living Free** would have a goal of influencing at least 500 people. Those people would begin to change other people's lives. When I get leaders on board and an Advisory Board, we will have the cream of the crop and this would accelerate the vision of **Living Free**.

CHAPTER SIX: SPRINGFIELD EXPERIENCE

Living in Springfield has been a positive experience. It is a nice, small community with a lot of activities. Joy and I are involved with the police academy, the library, etc. Springfield has been a ripe community for the vision of **Living Free**. When Joy and I get our green cards, there will no longer be any barriers in the way. We do not have a definite date for our green cards yet, but we do have travel rights now until March of next year. The next thing we should receive is the work permit which will allow us to run seminars and charge for them. This will complete everything we need to pursue our mission of motivating others through **Living Free** and applying the Caleb Principle.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINAL THOUGHTS

Two for the Road

Picture two backpackers, a man and a woman, setting out on a journey.
As well as they are able, they have prepared themselves for a long trek.
They're excited. They're also inexperienced, untested, unproven and just a little bit scared.
Yet they have the essentials.
They have a good compass.
They have provisions.
They have each other.

The problem is that we have no idea at all where our path will lead.

Who knows what loves await to be discovered along the golden pathways of heaven?

We have a vague notion that there will be long climbs, beautiful vistas, long desert stretches, and swift rivers.

There will be bright sunlight; we also sense that rain will follow and the wind will blow.

We can also appreciate the fact that each of us will change on this journey.

What happens to us has a way of shaping our souls. We begin to see things through new eyes. We will find a peace that quiets us.

We will adjust to weakness, whether of bone and sinew or of the heart.

We will develop attitudes and attributes significantly different from the way we viewed things at the trailhead.

As the miles fall behind and the months and years slip by, we continue to walk side by side, sometimes helping each other across streams or up steep inclines, maintaining our long journey into the unknown.

Storms rage and pass on. Seasons pass. Companions on the trail come and go. We adjust, growing through each experience.

We stay together. Step by step, day by day, year after year. Our companionship is constant. When one stumbles the other is quick with a helping hand.

When you think about it, there aren't that many truly happy marriages out there. Marriage should radiate joy, peace, and a deep love for each other. Joy and I have two important reasons for working out at a gym and aqua aerobics. The second one is to stay in shape. The most important is to stay in contact with those who need the Lord in their lives. We are a couple who have been married for a long time and love each other more than ever.

It boils down to putting your life out there where people can see it. God is central in our lives. Because of that, we experience help and hope everyday.

Those of us who have been Christians for many years sometimes forget to take those few minutes to push back from our work, take a deep breath, ponder the Lord who loves us, and allow ourselves to be drawn back to reality. And what is reality? Reality tells us that our God is always with us and that His strength is eminently available to those who call upon Him...no matter what. Psalms 46:1-3

Deep down, below those surface waves and spray and froth, God's love and plans for our lives have not changed.

The Lord Jesus is our ultimate strength, wisdom, and defense against all that life might throw against us.



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