

Chapter 30

Reminisces: Thanksgiving 1956

On the eve of this Thanksgiving in the year of our Lord 1956, I feel that today is a great vantage point from which one may view the tremendous panorama of God's goodness - past, present, and future. What lies ahead in the beneficence of God can be measured only by that which has been bestowed on us in the past. Should the future hold blessings comparable to which have gone before, I am sure that our thankfulness to the Lord will know no bounds.

We count our blessings, it seems to me, far too seldom. Once a year is not nearly enough to review the gifts and graces the Lord in His love has seen fit to tender to us. Still at Thanksgiving time it seems a particularly appropriate moment to do so and to render our grateful appreciation for His blessings. And so as I sit here reminiscing over the past, the many marks of God's favor crowd in upon me. My heart is filled to overflowing with awe and gratitude. Though the way has sometimes been difficult and puzzling, I can look back and see that each time an insurmountable obstacle appeared in the path, God's *Hand* was promptly extended to raise me over it.

I see the pattern of my life from earliest childhood being woven together by incidents which at that time seemed a little strange and yet one seemed powerless to take any other road. Even as a child, the *Hand* on my shoulder guided me firmly and unerringly away from the lanes of aimlessness and the bypaths of frustration and led me back upon the highway of God's main route.

But in remembering this and the countless other blessings, large and small, which the Lord in His love has visited upon me during my lifetime, I am thinking especially today of the great goodness which He showed in surrounding me with a family who have been a great source of satisfaction and affection through a trying and sometimes wearing journey.

I remember the day on which my eldest child, Patricia Doris, was saved and the time she was baptized in the Holy Spirit. God kindly allowed me to be with her when He was filling her with the Spirit; and I saw through its manifestation the very carefulness of God as He granted

her, a young girl, the strong power to be His witness. I have watched her since as she has grown with Him and observed her choices along the way that were well directed by God in advance of her decisions. I saw her enter into a God-ordained ministry of writing Sunday School literature, the Latter Rain Evangel, and the PeterPat series of children's books, as well as all the educational material for the Confirmation classes. Likewise I have seen her ministry and burden for youth develop and mature, and now as a young mother causing her four sons to also walk in the Way.

FOR THIS, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!

Then I reflect upon my eldest son, James Lee. As a weak, sickly child, we despaired many times that we would never succeed in raising him to manhood. Today I recall our great thankfulness in seeing the faithfulness of God in bringing him out of all this weakness into the strength of a good man.

I recall also the night James Lee failed to return home on time from the Young People's Meeting at the church. I was much worried and concerned at the thought of what may have befallen him and prayed earnestly to God for his protection. At midnight he came home and dashed up the stairs to me, taking two or three steps at a time; he was crying, "Mother, I've got Him. Mother, I've got Him!" I met Jim at the top of the staircase. Suddenly his arms were around me as he sobbed, "Mother, God has given me the precious Holy Spirit and has called me to help you in the work!"

God had indeed given him a vision that night of the burden that the Lord had put upon me. Jim had cried out to God that he might help me carry this burden. Right then and there the Lord baptized him in the Holy Spirit.

A few years later just as he was about to graduate from high school, Jim prepared to enter the Navy in World War II. It was a terribly bitter experience for me, and I felt it was more than I could stand. Then God whispered to me: "I will keep what you commit to me against that day."²⁷ He anointed me to make the committal, and the peace of God entered my heart. I knew without further doubt that Jim was safe in God's hands and would come back.

²⁷ 2 Timothy 1:12

I see him later, having returned - restless, confused, and seeking his niche in life. Then God spoke to Jim again calling him to the ministry, and he accepted the call.

FOR THIS ALSO, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!

Then my thoughts turn to our youngest child, our son Harry, who was called by God when a mere boy. Harry was baptized in the Holy Spirit as a young boy, receiving with the Baptism a burden to help others to receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord has given him a ministry of song and the teaching and preaching of the Word.

I remember as I sit here the day when his final decision was made. He had attended Bible College in Waxahachie, Texas and had returned still restless, still unsettled as to his future. On this day he decided to enroll in Wayne University to study to be a high school teacher. After enrolling he returned home and told me what he had done. Looking into his face I knew his decision had not answered the question in his heart. As I saw him sitting there with the burden of his decision heavy upon him, and yet without the satisfaction of having done what he really wished, my heart ached for him.

So I asked Harry, "Son, would you like mother to pray with you?" He answered that he would. We went upstairs to my study, fell upon our knees in prayer, and God met us. Harry said yes to God and farewell to the college and entered into God's ministry.

FOR THIS, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!

It blesses me to remember the faithfulness of God in choosing a Christian mate for each one of my children and to see their children raised for God.

FOR THIS, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!!!

Finally as I sit here reminiscing over the past, I remember how God caused me to choose the mate He had ordained for me, Harry Beall. It was a strange way in which God accomplished this purpose, but His Word says,

“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained that you bring forth much fruit.”²⁸

As I think of my husband and the goodness of God that was shown to him - how the Lord called him, raised him from his deathbed, and laid upon his heart the burden of the engineering and construction of the great spiritual plant here in Detroit . . .

FOR THIS, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!

Myrtle Dorthea Monville Beall

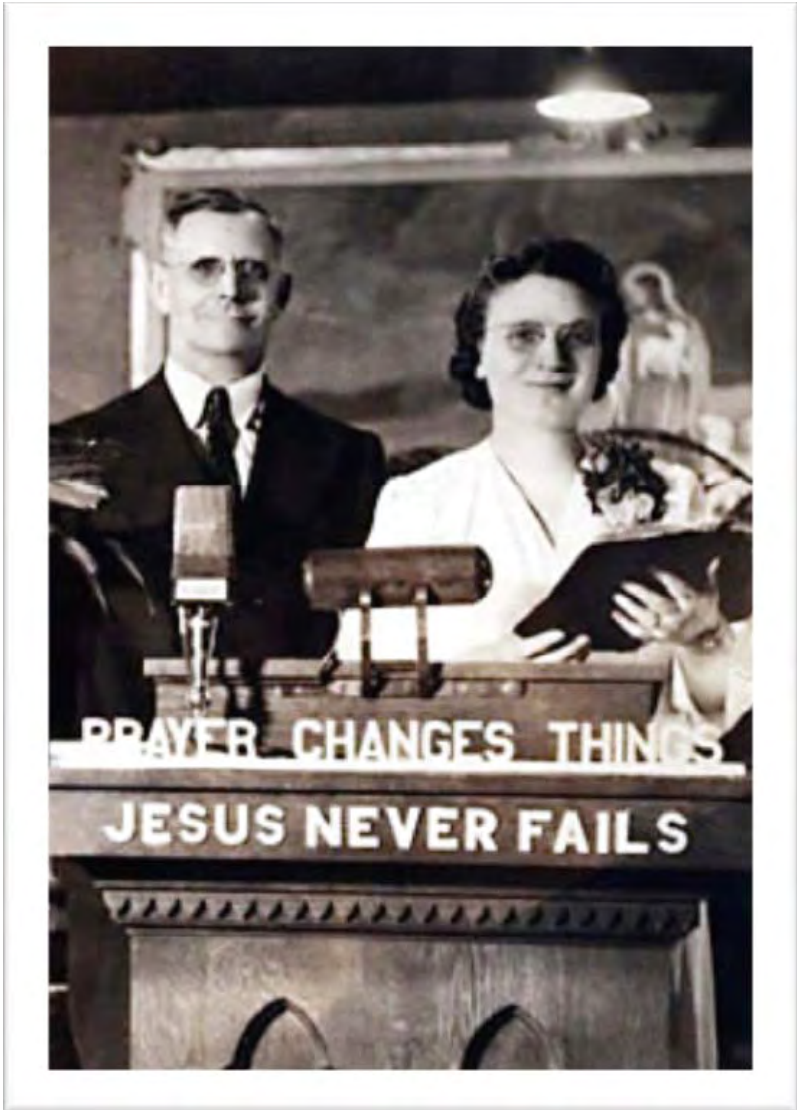
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For you, the great-grandchildren, to have such a woman of God, a woman of faith and obedience as your ancestor is such an honor and blessing. She has left an awesome spiritual legacy that inspires those who hear it to seek God more fervently and to know the plans He has for their lives and the lives of their children, even their children's children. As you reflect on her life of faith and obedience, her dedication to prayer and knowing the Voice of God to lead her, I am sure your response is the same as hers in November of 1956:

FOR THIS, LORD, I AM GRATEFUL!

Joy Hughes Gruits

²⁸ John 15:16



Harry and Pastor M.D. Beall



CHRONOLOGY

- December 9, 1894** Myrtle Dorthea Monville is born in Hubbell, Michigan
- June 1910** Myrtle graduated at the age of 16 from Lake Linden High School
- June 15, 1920** Myrtle Monville marries Harry Lee Beall at the Methodist Episcopal Church
- June 14, 1934** Bethesda (Missionary) Tabernacle opened as a Sunday School for children. It would later be referred to as the Mission.
- 1936** The “Portable Church” is purchased and moved
- 1937** An addition is built onto the “Portable Church”
- 1939** The Bethesda Missionary Tabernacle - Basement Church is built
- 1948** Construction of the Armory:
Bethesda Missionary Temple
- November 1948** M.D. Beall (Myrtle) travels to Vancouver, B.C.
- December 1949** In the Basement Church a Latter Rain Revival begins
- February 13, 1949** Dedication of the Armory (the Sanctuary of Bethesda Missionary Temple) For the next 3 ½ years Latter Rain Revival services continue day and night
- 1949-1950** Bethesda becomes an independent church. (Ends its affiliation with the Assemblies of God)

- 1951** First issue of the *Latter Rain Evangel* is published by Evangel Press established by Peter and Patricia Beall Gruits
- 1952** The first gymnasium, the Recreation Center, is built
- 1955** Patricia Beall Gruits teaches the first Youth Catechism class with material that eventually would be developed into the book, *Understanding God*
- June 1958** Bethesda is pictured in an article in the national magazine, LIFE (the June 9th edition). The article was titled: “The Third Force in Christendom.”
- 1959** Patricia Beall Gruits teaches the first Adult Catechism Class
- 1962** Lightning strikes and sets the Basement Building on fire. It turned out to be a blessing making possible a 4-story Education Building to be erected in its place.
- 1962** The first edition of *Understanding God* is published
- 1964** The Education Building is completed
- September 1979** M.D. Beall, Myrtle Dorthea Monville Beall, passes away after 45 years of faithful pastoring of Bethesda Missionary Temple.
- 1979** M.D. Beall is written about in the book *A Walk Across America*

1989

The sanctuary of Bethesda Christian Church in Sterling Heights, Michigan, previously known as Bethesda Missionary Temple, is dedicated, thus fulfilling the word given to M.D. Beall to build a sanctuary to seat 3,000.