

Forum

—learning together—
Prairie Tabernacle
April, 2011

Trust Me

A beckoning hand caught my eye one Sunday afternoon. As I moved across the room, the serious look on my father's face made me question what I had done. As I came close, he whispered. "I want you to know we made a decision over the weekend. We're going to stay in Canada for another two years. Until Jenny graduates." My mind took in the words, but did not comprehend, and later, as I was alone in my room, the knee-jerk response began. Why not the other way? *Why stay?* It had been what I had wanted, and yet the fresh pain of deciding started the tears. Finally, knowing and realizing what the decision meant, I didn't know what I was supposed to feel, what I was supposed to think. One morning, I asked my Father, "Is this Your will for me to stay here?" And right over my heart, from inside of me, I felt the answer, "Yes." As I realized it was His will, peace came over me.

Throughout the days that followed, I started to remember the little things I had forgotten. Memories caused me to bury my head in my pillow. As I

cried, for the first time since hastily leaving the country of my heart, I asked, "Why?" Why the childhood memories if I am to stay here? Why the sickness that caused me to lose a sister for two years? Why the memories? Why the pain? Why this way? I turned on some music and listened. Song after song, one phrase was passed to my heart—that He wanted me to hear and understand. "Trust Me."

As I realize this decision is right, that He has a perfect plan for my life and is gently shaping and molding me to become truly His, I lean on His strength. For the first time, I am allowing myself to remember, allowing myself to grieve for what was left behind. My heart starts to heal, and I know my tears are precious in His sight. I don't know my future or His plans, but I know I was never alone. I will never be alone as I continue to learn and to trust in Him alone.

—Christy Scott

Jesus, I come!

August, 1962. My husband, Don, had been gone for nine months on his second missionary survey trip to Japan and Korea. Finally the exciting day arrived—he was coming home. Plans were made to welcome him, including dress, hair, and instructions to our three children: "Wait for Daddy to hug Mommy first, then he'll hug each one of you."

At the Calgary Airport, as soon as Daddy appeared, our youngest, Sylvia, 7, took off running, lost a shoe (to the amusement of onlookers), and jumped into Daddy's arms. So much for my plan!

When I approach my heavenly Father in prayer, is it with the same passionate love Sylvia had for her dad? Does it bless and warm God's heart as it did Don's? I think so!

—Vivian Bruck

Music transfer service

OK, time to get all those dusty cassettes and musty LPs transferred to CD. And what about those piles of favorite videos lurking in the back closet? Enjoy them on DVD. Call Abe Wiebe (403) 443-5057. Simple. Fast. Easy. The fee is open ended. Anything you give above my cost goes into ministry.

Just wait

It seems God was silent when Jesus was falsely and unfairly condemned, beaten, mocked, and crucified.

But God acted! When Jesus cried, "It [the price of redemption] is finished," the earth shook, the sky was darkened, the veil was torn, and the dead arose! The centurion cried out, "Surely, this was the Son of God!"

It seems God is silent today, even though He sees the wickedness that goes on day and night: sexual and wife abuse, prostitution, pornography, murder, adultery, broken marriages, hurt children, and government corruption.

But God will act! Revelation says the wrath of God will be poured out and justice will be done. Mountains and islands will disappear, stars will fall; a quarter, and again, a third of humanity will die, and plagues will afflict mankind, including 100-pound hailstones.

When mockers deride our loving God for allowing sin and suffering, injustice and lawlessness, we can explain that God is being patient, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Our church has been enriched in this school year by Bible college students

Thank you for your contributions to the congregation—some visible, some behind the scenes. To those graduating, may you find peace and satisfaction in your chosen ministry. For those coming back to Three Hills this fall, we look forward to your return and participation in the Tab family. May your summer be productive and a wonderful opportunity to practice what you learned in class and in our church.

May these thoughts guide you, wherever you serve.

- If you would not say it in front of a congregation, don't say it anywhere.
- Keep peace on a daily basis.
- The Lord is your light and your salvation, whom shall you fear?
- God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on your behalf, so that you might become the righteousness of God in Him. *How cool is that?*

The Prairie Tabernacle Story

Article IV—Prairie Tabernacle's New Horizons (2006 and Onwards)
by Rhoda Murray

1. In what month in 2006 was Pastor Tim's first preaching Sunday at Prairie Tabernacle as senior pastor?
2. The themes and related Scripture passages that Pastor Tim has chosen and developed for each yearly

morning message series are:

2006: A Sure _____
(____ 28:16)

2007: _____ Servants
in the Lord (____ 4:7)

2008: Don't _____ Your
_____ (____ 6:19-21)

2009: Ye _____ Be _____
Again (____ 3:7)

2010: _____, I Will _____
You (____ 3:10)

2011: _____! (____ 22:20)

3. List the three main ministry categories of Prairie Tabernacle:

L _____

R _____

G _____

4. Complete the title of each Prairie Tab ministry.

a. _____ Walk

b. _____ Arts

c. Bible Q _____

d. _____ Initiative

e. _____ First _____ Team

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Sixty Years Ago: A Small Boy's Memories of China

I was born in the province of Yunnan, China, where our family served as missionaries with the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship). When I was three, my parents (Norman and Evelyn Charter), my sisters Ruthie (5) and Miriam (1) and I, began the long and difficult journey from southwest China to Hong Kong, England, and Canada. That was 60 years ago. These are some of the things I remember from that era.

The compound where we lived was surrounded by a high stone wall with a gate. Windows were covered with paper instead of glass, and Ruthie and I liked to poke our fingers through the paper windows. I recall standing in the courtyard and watching our cook, Chang Ta Sao, grinding peanuts into peanut butter with a millstone, or making a wonderful large pancake we loved to eat with brown sugar.

Two missionary "uncles" lived with us. Uncle Larry Peet was a sort of stand-in daddy when our dad was away; I remember him correcting me when I misbehaved. Uncle Cecil Gracey's antics—balancing a chair or a bamboo pole on his forehead—attracted crowds of Chinese during marketplace evangelism. He had a wind-up record player, which the communist authori-

ties were convinced he used to send radio messages to America. I watched him demonstrate it for them when they came to question him about it.

I loved to be with my mom, watching her sew with her crank-operated Singer sewing machine. I would often tag along with Daddy through the streets of Xiangyûn, where we lived. Sometimes he took me to the church, and one day I set out walking by myself, pretending I was going to Sunday school. On the way, I met a water buffalo that swung his huge horns and knocked me into a ditch full of water. A Chinese man rescued me, just as a Christian man appeared and took me home, where I was immediately put to bed for the afternoon.

China was transitioning to a communist society then, and although I didn't understand what was happening around us, I knew about fear. Even after we'd settled at PBI, the sight of PE students doing exercises on the playing field struck fear into my young heart because I remembered groups of men doing military drills near our house in China. I thought communists were taking over Three Hills.

One of my most vivid memories is of an encounter outside our gate, where I was watching for vehicles driving down the street. Trucks fascinated me, and when I saw a large military truck coming our way, I ran into the street for a better look. The driver stopped, several soldiers jumped off, and hoisted me onto the back of the



The Charter family, 1949, Tali, Yunnan province, SW China, near the Thai border: Evelyn and Norman; Miriam, Ruthie, Vernon.

truck. They may have meant no harm, but I was terrified, and started to cry. Dear five-year-old Ruthie, who was providentially standing at the gate, ran into the street and shouted at the soldiers in Chinese, telling them to put her brother down immediately. They obeyed and Ruthie put her arm around her little brother and led me inside the courtyard.

March 11, 1951: left Xiangyûn

When missionaries recognized that their presence had become a danger to the Chinese Christians, the exodus began. After waiting weeks for travel permission, our family, along with other missionaries, left Xiangyûn in March 1951. I remember going into the street early in the morning, where we were hoisted into a truck, along with our suitcases, trunks, and bedding bundles, on top of a load of oranges. The three-day trip to Kunming was the first stage of our trip out of China, the part I remember most

clearly. The weather was sunny, and I thoroughly enjoyed the adventure of traveling along the winding, mountainous Burma Road. I can still see a soldier, also traveling to Kunming, sitting cross-legged on the roof of the truck cab with his rifle across his lap.

March 14, 1951: arrived in Kunming

We spent several weeks in Kunming, while our travel papers were processed, and waited for transportation to Chungking. The rest of the trip is hazy, but two incidents come to mind. One day I was in a butcher shop in the market with Daddy, and while he was busy talking, the butcher picked up a large cleaver and playfully made as if he were going to cut off my head. I was frightened, but glad that my daddy was with me and would protect me. Once, when I was having my afternoon nap, I heard screaming across the street. Looking out the window, I saw a man selling his little daughter to a man. I was hardly old enough to

understand what was happening, but vividly remember her desperate cries as she was dragged away.

April 13, 1951: flew to Chungking

When we were cleared to travel, we flew from Kunming to Chungking in a WW II plane with iron bucket seats. I remember 3- or 4-inch round plugs in the windows, which we could pull out if we wanted a breath of fresh air! Dad told us later that a prisoner wearing a black hood was also on our flight; he was being escorted to execution.

After more weeks of waiting in Chungking for permission and passage to proceed, I'm told that we sailed down the Yangtze River, through those incredible gorges, as far as Hankow. At one point, we were confined in a Chinese inn for ten days due to measles. From Hankow, we traveled by train to Freedom Bridge—the link to Hong Kong. My parents said that, after we were searched by the Communist guards one last time, we walked across that bridge toward the British flag, where my mother stood and wept, hardly believing we were finally free.

May 22, 1951: arrived in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, we were put up in a hotel until we could book a flight to England. We met Dad's cousin, John Charter, and his family, although I hardly remember them. One thing I clearly recall from Hong Kong is the taste of a kind of rice we ate, which I've never tasted since.

June 16, 1951: flew from Hong Kong destined for London, England

On our flight to England we encountered a monsoon over the Indian Ocean, so the plane landed in Rangoon, Burma, until the storm passed. We must have been in some danger, because we were low enough to see whitecaps. At Karachi, Pakistan, we waited 2-3 days for a replacement tire for the plane. We also stopped in Bahrain (Persian Gulf)—it was so hot the butter in the bowls melted. Then it was on to Cyprus and France, before arriving in London.

We stayed several weeks in London: I remember double-decker busses, underground railways, and the London Zoo (particularly camels and penguins). The CIM home in London did things the British way, and I was distressed at having meals without our parents.

July 23, 1951: arrived in Halifax by ship

In July we sailed from England to Canada, a one-week trip during which my only memory is of seeing the high waves out the porthole (apparently we went through quite a storm). We arrived in Halifax July 23, 1951, and traveled to Vancouver by train. In August we came to Three Hills, which became home for the next 18 years of my life.

On this 60th anniversary of our arrival in Canada after leaving China, we are filled with gratitude to the God of glory, not only for His mercies to our

family and fellow missionaries in the middle of turmoil and danger, but for the astounding increase of His kingdom in China during many hidden years!

—Vernon Charter

The Prairie Tabernacle Story

Article IV—Prairie Tabernacle’s New Horizons

5. What are the five divisions of Prairie Tab children’s ministries.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

6. Pastor Pete, Student Ministries leader: “We are committed to the _____ and _____ of the Bible when it comes to our programs.”

7. List the names of any five mission societies with regular weekly or monthly prayer meetings arranged and hosted by Prairie Tab seniors.

_____, _____,
_____, _____,

8. The vision of Prairie Tabernacle is:
Christ in _____;
Christ in _____;
Christ in _____

9. The Prairie Tab’s mission:
“A praying, _____ and _____ church that makes _____ of Jesus Christ locally and _____, to the glory of God.”

10. First Corinthians 15:58 is the verse Pastor Tim quoted in the Ministry Guide:

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be _____, _____, always _____ in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your _____ is not in vain.”

Answers

1. January
2. Foundation/Isaiah; Fellow/Colossians; Waste, Life/Matthew; Must, Born/John; Come, Send/Exodus; Soon/Revelation
3. Local, Regional, Global
4. Bethlehem; Worship, Quizzing, Antioch, Sunchild, Nation,
5. Tab Kids, Toddler Sunday School, Nursery, Awana, Vacation Bible School
6. importance; centrality
7. CSSM, CEF, Arab World, Avant, World Team, SIM, TEAM, NCEM, CrossWorld
8. Word, Spirit, You
9. teaching, caring, disciples, globally
10. steadfast, immovable, abounding, labor



Forum is a Prairie Congregation platform for learning, for exchanging spiritual ideas, encouragements, and insights. Your contribution is welcome.

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