

A Christian Never Retires

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Preacher: Beth Allen

- [0 : 0 0] Well, thank you so much for being here. Is this on now? Yeah. Okay. Joan and I, I think we met at Senior's Tea because I bring my mom there on a regular basis, and Joan had... Because I'm a senior, I go to it. Yeah. Yeah, and so last fall, Solveig was putting a request out for ideas for topics, and I think, I don't know when it was that I had realized that Joan had worked overseas, but I approached her and asked her if perhaps we could do... I could interview her at Senior's Tea and get her to talk about her life. And so that began our relationship, and so I spent... She doesn't... She goes to Joy Fellowship normally on a Sunday, but she attends other churches as well, and she enjoys coming to not only Senior's Tea, but to Evensong on a Tuesday night. So she is an associate member of St. John's Vancouver. Well, I was an Anglican, but don't tell anybody. But... Anyway, so I spent a couple of visits going over to Joan's apartment, and we talked, and we arrived at a few questions, and so that's what the basis of this interview is, is some of the things that I learned about her very interesting life.
- [2 : 0 3] So we're going to start. And Joan, by way of setting the scene, your father came to Canada when he was 10 years old. He, along with a number of his siblings, worked at your grandfather's shoe store, M. Lang's in Strathcona. Your mother was really young when she married your father. In fact, she hadn't even met him beforehand. But this wasn't unusual in Chinese culture. So, is that the case that there are families... You told me that families have arranged marriages, and this was one of those. And interestingly enough, your mother wasn't from China, but was from Cumberland on Vancouver Island. I thought, wow. So there's apparently been a very... a small but cohesive Christian community, or Chinese community there for a number of years.
- [3 : 2 4] Had you ever got to get over to Cumberland? No, I never did. But I understood there was a large Chinese community there, and there were missionaries who visited the different homes. Now, I don't know how they did it in Cumberland, but in Vancouver, the area was divided amongst the different churches. The Presbyterians had their area, the United Church, and the Anglicans, and so on. So there was no sheep stealing. This especially was in Strathcona. They've got strict boundaries, right? And even like to go to school, we were on Friar Street, and to go to school, we had to pass by the Roman Catholic Church. And I don't know what you heard about the Roman Catholic Church in your childhood, but in those days, the nuns wore long garments, and my mother used to say, now, if you're not a good girl, they'll snatch you and hide you under their coat.

So we always ran past the Roman Catholic Church to go to school. So that was the kind of area we lived in. You were the oldest of eight children, the first grandchild, and you lived with a large extended family in Strathcona, 17 people, and one bathroom, if I recall.

[4 : 47] Those were the old houses, right? They had big houses, had lots of people in it, one bathroom. I mean, we can't imagine that these days.

And were there any fights over that? You know, I don't even remember ever having to line up the weight to use the washroom. I don't know. I think we all had our different little time schedule, and we just coxed and boxed, and there was never any trouble.

And of course, you said that because you were the first grandchild, I don't know if these were your words or somebody else's words, that you were the spoiled brat, because you were the oldest.

You're right. I was the spoiled brat. No, you see, I was the first grandchild of the Liu family. And even though I was a girl, because, you know, Chinese people wanted boys, but even though I was a girl, I was very much welcome.

And I was so anxious to get into the world, I actually arrived before the doctor did. So your parents weren't Christians, but you and your siblings went to the Good Shepherd Mission.

[6 : 07] How did that happen? Well, you know, in those days, I don't know when the mission started, the missionary started, but the Good Shepherd Church was actually an outreach of St. James Church in Vancouver, downtown.

And so the Chinese work was started by the St. James Congregation, the parish piece there. And when the missionaries arrived, I don't know, but you see, even my aunts and uncles were influenced by the missionaries.

And what they did in those days, what I remember when I was a child, they used to come and visit the different homes. And they came with their Bible story books. And it was just simply like a home Sunday school.

They came with their picture books and they told stories. Some of them, actually learned the language. How many of you remember Dr. Hilda Helleby? Oh, good for you.

She was one of the missionaries there and she learned the language. And then there was a Mrs. Field. And she was a missionary in China. She went with her husband with, I think, I think something like OMF, Oriental Missionary Fellowship.

[7 : 24] Today, in those days, it was called China Inland Mission. And she and her husband went to China. And after they had their first child, somehow, I think her husband got some kind of illness and he died.

And she came back with her son to Vancouver and then got involved with the Chinese work in Vancouver. And Mrs. Field was just such a dear, dear person.

Yeah. She was really a lovely Christian. She was influential in your life. And we'll talk about that in a minute. Was there anyone else in the family who went to church?

Like I say, missionaries came even before I was born. So my aunts and uncles, they started off with them. Okay. Yeah. And let me see. I was born in 29.

So my aunts and uncles would be in the period before that. And the Depression Day was the 29th. 1929 was when it started.

[8 : 30] Well, I think even before that, no, no, it couldn't have been. It was around that time and there were many Chinese people who became Christians that they called themselves, or maybe they didn't call themselves, but they were named Rice Christians because the church was able to help them.

But, so, but our family was not in that position because my grandfather had his shop. He owned a shoe manufacturing shop on Main Street the building is still there right next to the CIBC bank on Main and Keef, upender.

The big, right, the building right next to it was my grandfather's. And so, my, one of my sisters, let me see, I'm number one, my fourth, the fourth child, her name is Jude, she always grumbled, I was born in a time of the Depression, and I didn't have anything.

And she didn't realize, what, the Depression didn't involve everybody. You know, it was only the people who were, had no finance to begin with, they were the ones who were the down and out, but Grandpa had his shop.

And in fact, during that Depression time, Grandpa bought his first car. So I said, June, we were not badly off.

[9 : 51] She still doesn't believe it today. Oh, you, you attended Strathcona Elementary School, and then you went on to Britannia High School, where you attended inter-school Christian fellowship.

It was here that you encountered a born-again Baptist girl. Was it her that got you thinking that you might like to get baptized? Well, she was the beginning, but before that, I was already attending the Good Shepherd Sunday School.

Every Sunday, we would go to Sunday School, but at grade 8, in those days, grade 8 was the time you went into high school. So, at high school, we all went, my friends and I, we all went to different schools.

Some went to commercial, some went to Van Tech, and so on. But it's not like that nowadays. Anyway, so because of that, we all went our different ways, so our sort of friendship broke up.

And, because we were going to different areas at times, it was different. Then, I stopped going to Sunday School, because they didn't go, and so I didn't go, you know, spare pressure, right?

[11 : 05] And, but, so, at Britannia High School, there was this Baptist girl. She was really great. And she, in the locker room, she was really keen.

She put on the lockers, are you saved? Little stickers like that. She stuck on everybody's locker. And so I thought to myself, hmm, you know, saved from what?

And actually, I was attending inter-school Christian, inter-school Christian fellowship. And at that time, I didn't even realize we had a teacher sponsor, but she was never there.

It was just the kids that were there. Then, in grade 10, at the end of the year, we had our elections for the next term. So they said, they wanted to make me like president or secretary, so I thought to myself, I don't even know what they're talking about.

You know, I could sing the hymns because I knew the music and everything, but I really knew very, very little, almost nothing about the Bible except from what I heard in Sunday school. And, so, because of that, I ran away from God.

[12 : 12] And at that time, my grandparents had moved up to 20th and Ontario. And so that was in the King Edward High School catchment. So I used their address and went to King Edward High School.

But, you know, when God gets a hold of you, he doesn't let go. So, at King Edward High School, guess what I did? I joined the inter-school Christian fellowship.

Well, there you go. And, and you found people who were going to Camp Ardaban.

Mm-hmm. And, well, there was Aunt Dorothy who was encouraging to you, to your involvement at church.

And, and it was her that spoke to your mom about having you go to Camp Ardaban. And, that was quite something for a young Chinese girl to get a chance to go to summer camp.

[13 : 22] Well, it was, because, you know, we were a big family. And, you couldn't send all of us to camp, but I was chosen. And, and, uh, at King Edward High School, I, how many of you remember Marilyn Fain?

She went to King Edward High School. And, her mother, Mrs. Fain, was, uh, very active in, what, in those days, the WA? And, anyway, um, so, at King Edward, I met a lot of, um, uh, Anglican young Christians.

And, uh, Marilyn was one of them. My aunt Dorothy actually was baptized by that, by that time. And so, she was actually chosen as a leader to go to Camp Art event.

But, what happened was, I think they thought that the Chinese girls, uh, wouldn't, know very much. So, we were all put in the same cabin with my aunt as the, as the leader.

We weren't mixed up. And I think that was really too bad. But, anyway, that was how it was. Now, you were, you were back baptized at the Good Shepherd Mission when you were 15.

[14 : 30] Um, we see after that, at King Edward, um, they wanted me to become an officer again at the Inter School Christian Fellowship.

You know, never learn. So, so, I, uh, decided, well, I better go back to church and find out what it's all about.

That's when I went back to Sunday school. And I don't know about nowadays. And I, Beth is hearing a lot of things I never told her. But this is fine.

Anyway, at, um, uh, when I went to the Good Shepherd, went back, after a year, I think, it was not long, after a year, they needed somebody to teach Sunday school.

Just because I was going there regularly for a year, they asked me to teach. Well, you know, it's easy to teach. I think that's one of the gifts God has given me.

[15 : 25] If you have a book, you just follow it. So I was teaching from the book, but I, uh, began to think, does this really happen? Did the missionaries really go there?

You know, did Jesus really do that? I was just teaching from the book. I didn't really believe it. I was questioning it. And, um, and this is one thing. At the Inter-School Christian Fellowship, you know, no one actually, not even the Baptist girl, no one really asked me, I only said that because Joan said she was a Baptist background.

No one really asked me if I was a Christian. No one. They just assumed that I was because I could read the music and sing the songs with great gusto and the rest of them.

And, um, when it came to saying Bible verses, we were given certain ones to memorize, I could say that, but no one really asked, do you know Jesus? You know, and I don't know whether it's like that today in our churches.

So, I'm saying this today because in my experience as a missionary, I don't want to assume that in a group like this even, where you all attend church service regularly, I don't want to assume that you all know Jesus.

[16 : 46] But I also don't want to assume that you don't know Jesus. So, that's why I'm being so frank. So, you, uh, you got, um, you got baptized, and then you got, you were confirmed, um, and then one day when you were about 16 years old, you had a talk with, uh, with, uh, with, Mrs. Field, and that really changed how you viewed Jesus.

What did she say to you? She said, that's the other thing. I asked to be baptized, and in the Anglican system, you go to the prayer book, um, catechism, and you learn it, you can repeat the answers, but you know, no one really asked, no one really said that, um, Jesus is somebody you can talk to.

No one really said why I should love Jesus. But I only wanted, um, to be baptized because I had a very bad temper.

I thought if I became baptized, God would change me. And when I was baptized, you have some sort of, um, emotional feeling about it.

And I thought, okay, but I still had a bad temper. Then I thought, okay, in the Anglican Church, the next step is confirmation. So maybe after confirmation, when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, wow, that's going to be the great thing, isn't it?

[18 : 18] So, I was confirmed. But at confirmation, it was the same feeling. I still was very, bad tempered. And I, that really troubled me.

Then one day, they chose for me, my baptism, they chose my auntie because she was already baptized. And they chose Mrs. Field and she was the dearest person, like I said. And she and I became very close friends.

So one day, she and I were walking and, uh, we went past a Salvation Army servant. She said to me, shall we go in? And I thought to myself, what?

Go in there? So, no, no, I said, no, it's all right. We'll just keep walking. So we didn't go. And so I told her about some of the things that were troubling me. And it was Mrs. Field who said to me, well, why don't you tell Jesus?

That was my first indication that Jesus is a person you can approach and talk to. You don't have to go through a priest or a Sunday school teacher or a counselor or anything.

[19 : 26] We can go directly to Jesus with our needs. And that was the change of my whole life. Well, um, um, there you were.

Um, oh, I want to tell you something. Oh, yes. Okay. Because that was, that changed me so much. Um, Mrs. Field, I didn't have a Bible. Oh, yes, I did. At my confirmation, they gave me a Bible to make it look like that.

Anyway, uh, I didn't really read it very well because I didn't know how, you know, I didn't understand it. But, I borrowed Mrs. Field's Bible and everything she underlined, I underlined.

I don't know why I underlined it, but hers was underlined, so it must mean something. And, like I said, that was really the beginning. That's great. Um, you had grown up wanting to become a nurse.

Um, and, you graduated from high school, but, and applied, but you weren't accepted because you were too short. Or, at least, that's what they told you. Um, how did you manage to get into the lab technician program at Shaughnessy Hospital?

[20 : 37] Sorry. At that time, um, our family doctor knew the lab, one of the lab techs at Shaughnessy Hospital, and they were starting their very first lab techs training, uh, class.

So she, he spoke to this friend that he knew and, uh, got me to have an interview with the pathologist there, and that's how I got in. And, you know, I did apply to the general and to St. Paul's, and, uh, when I went for my interview, uh, they took one look at me, I don't know why, anyway, I was all refused at those places.

So when I was given this opportunity to apply at Shaughnessy, I phoned the pathologist and said, um, thank you very much for having me to come for an interview, but I said to her, you know, I'm Chinese.

She said, that's all right, but I really feel that that was why I was refused at the general and the St. Paul. In those days, there was that prejudice. And, um, I have, um, and by marriage, she wanted to be a nurse and she wasn't accepted.

And I don't know if some of you are old Vancouver residents, you might have heard of Clara, Clara Chang, I think she was called. She actually became the head nurse at the UGH later on, so that was great.

[21 : 58] You, um, you accepted your first position at the Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops where you worked for two years. And, uh, with a letter of introduction from friends in Vancouver, and apparently that's how things were done in those days, you began attending St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops.

Tell us a little bit about your experience there. Now, I don't know whether people still write letters of, um, introduction and, and you take it with you, but this was a lady in the, uh, WA, she said, Joan, I'll write you a letter of introduction and when you get to St. Paul's, you just take it and give it to the rector.

So that's what I did because with, with this letter of introduction, I had an immediate in, and so I was able to join the choir and I did all sorts of things with them. and, uh, uh, and through my time at, uh, Kamloops, Jim Jolly was also a, uh, graduate of Wycliffe College and he gave terrific sermons and through that time, my, uh, Christian faith began to grow and I, really then I began to study the Bible and there came a time that I really felt that what I was doing in the lab, was a waste of time and that I, I should use that talent that God has given me to do something else for him and that's how I applied to go to the Anglican Women's Training College in those days.

And that was, uh, a pretty big decision because it, it was a four-year program. Um, did your parents have any thoughts about this? Because, I mean, you were 23 years old going across the country to get theological training.

Um, were they, uh, are they supportive of this? Yes, because you know, um, Chinese people and not only Chinese, I think many parents, this is what they want for their children and education, they want the best for their children, right?

[24 : 06] They want them to be better. You want your children to be better than yourselves. And so each generation is like that. My brother and sister want their kids to be better than them and so on.

So now their sons and daughters are wanting their kids to be better. So that's how it goes. And because they were getting education, they didn't mind at all.

Maybe they didn't realize what I was getting into. And, and, um, the women's auxiliary sweetened the pie for you by offering you a scholarship.

Yes. So that was pretty nice. Yeah, that's great. I went through, um, AWTC with the, um, with the WA scholarship all the way.

Now, how was this experience at, um, um, AWTC? Was it a good one? It was great. I mean, I was away from home for one thing, not under the supervision of parents, and so it's always great.

[25 : 06] But we were under the supervision of a very strict principal who ran the Anglican Women's Training College like a girl's school. We had to sign in and out.

We had a curfew. We had to be in by nine o'clock. And, I think, because of my size and, because I came all the way from Vancouver, school was in Toronto, and they thought, oh, little Joan, she'll get lost in Toronto.

And one time, friends of mine invited me up for Christmas dinner. And, so I signed up and said where I was going. But on the way, I stopped to get some flowers.

And so I didn't arrive at my close home in time. So they got worried, and they go to the college. And so the principal, we called her Annie, Aunt Annie.

Her name was Annie Edgar. She was a nurse, actually, a missionary in India. And so Aunt Annie got very anxious, and she didn't know where to look for me, because I only signed out to say, I didn't say where we're going, we only had to sign out, we were going out, we didn't have to give an address or anything.

[26 : 15] So they were all worried because of that. And then when I got back that, the next day, I got a talking to, you know, that I was making them all worried, because I was lost in this big city of Toronto.

my goodness. And some of your fellow students initially thought you needed some extra prayer when you started.

Back to what I said about assuming that one is a Christian or not a Christian. So this was my first year at the college, and I was rooming with, she was in her second year, and then she was friends with some of the seniors.

And so they were all, ready friends, and they knew each other. And so, because maybe I didn't show the enthusiasm, maybe I didn't use the right language, I don't know. And so they assumed I was not born again.

Maybe I wasn't, I really don't know. Anyway, they, after lunch, this was their prayer time. So they would all go off to somebody's room and be praying.

[27 : 24] But after lunch, we're supposed to have a study time in our rooms. So she didn't come back for about half an hour, so I always wondered where she went. Eventually I found out that's what they were doing, they were praying for me.

And just don't estimate the power of prayer. It really works. If you are talking to the God you know.

God so during this time it sounded like you developed a closer relationship with the Lord over these four years.

And one of the interesting things that I discovered was that you met Harry Robinson. You see the girls at the ladies who were studying at the Anglistan Women Training College, we took our theology classes.

If you were an evangelical person, you took it at Wycliffe College. If you were a high church like from St. James or that side, then you took your lectures from Trinity College.

[28 : 38] The two colleges were opposite each other on Hoskett Avenue. And so Harry was already at Wycliffe. He was a year ahead of me.

And part of our training then was in the evenings, the churches in Toronto, the Anglican churches, had evening, after the evening service, they had what they called fireside groups.

And so Harry and I were often teamed up together to lead these fireside, like the learners had changed almost, mostly young people. And so we were called long and short of it.

And actually sometimes, you know, we had a great time. You know how tall Harry was, right? And so sometimes just for fun, I would climb up on a chair to be the same height. And at that same time, I met Fran also.

She happened to be the nurse of the doctor that I was going to. That's how I met Fran. So I thought that was interesting. And then you got to go to the very first camp of Pioneer Pacific with Kathy Nichols.

[29 : 57] Was that when you were home on vacation time? Yes. So how, and this was, I gather, before there was any kind of accommodation for camping.

I mean, that's right. It was the very first camp on Thaddeus Island. And there were just the platforms for the cabins. They were not built yet. I don't even remember what was, I think they were tents.

I don't remember really. Were you at that camp? The very first camp? I don't know if it was the first camp, but I was there when there were tents. Okay. Well, that was really great. And it was a great camp.

And see, by that time I was really born again. I knew what I believed after being in Toronto and having my friends pray for me.

Now, you graduated from the training college in 1956. What were your options for employment at that time? Well, you know, I was really actually quite naive about that sort of thing because I thought if you're in the Anglican system, you have to stay in the Anglican system.

[31 : 05] Although I had gone to church army prayer meetings, I'd gone to the CIM prayer meetings, and then there was in those days it was called the ZBMM, Zanana Bible and Medical Mission.

Then it became Bible and Medical Mission Fellowship because that's when they began to include the men. It was Zanana means women. In those days, the Anglican church and many other churches, they engaged missionaries to work only amongst the women and the men did their side of the thing.

I don't know. But the Zanana mission, when those ladies went over to India, they worked only amongst the women because in India, it was even more strict than China that the men and women do not make.

Even when I went to hospital, the men and women sat at different sides in the waiting room. And if we asked, this was in India, if we asked the woman her husband's name, she would not say it because it would be disrespectful to say his name.

So that's how strict it was in India. So there were these missions that I attended, the meetings and so on, but I didn't know that I had an option to go with them as a missionary, although they did say, you know, invited me, but I thought because I was an Anglican, I went to the women's training college, I had to stick with the Anglicans.

[32 : 39] So that meant the Anglican mission in those days outreach was in a hospital in the Arctic, there was a hospital and schools in Japan, and China work was out because at that time, 56, it was communist by then, and missionaries were not allowed in.

So that was my option, was Arctic, Japan, or China. Well, like I say, I was so naive, I thought, well, being Chinese, I wouldn't have to learn a language, I should go to China, but I didn't even have to think about that because it was closed, the door was closed.

So they said, you know, you try opening the doors. So I said, then I said, well, Lord, I really, I was a train lab technician at that time, and so I really don't like the cold, but Lord, I will go if that's where you want to me.

I'll go to Aklamic, up in the north, in Alaska. Alaska. The Arctic Circle. But I don't really like the cold, so I opened the door, and thanked the north, he said, no, we don't want you.

And then, at that time, when I was doing all this and praying about it, a letter from Dr. Florence Haslam, who was in charge of the Maple Leaf Hospital in Congo, India, which is at the very top here.

[34 : 05] Way, way, way, way, up here. Below that dark part. Just underneath Kashmir. That top dark part is Kashmir, and we were just below that in the Himalaya foothills.

And she, the doctor in charge there, wrote to Annie Edgar and said, look, my nursing superintendent who ran the x-ray is going back to Canada for leave.

Do you have somebody to send us? Maybe actually Annie Edgar might have written to her. about me, I don't know. So, Florence spoke to the principal and said, all right, I can use the lab tech only if she can also learn to run the x-ray machine.

Now, this was in May, and she wanted me to be there in September. So, June, July, August, three months to learn how to run an x-ray machine. Well, you know, three months, the course is two years.

so, anyway, I went to Toronto General, explained the situation to the doctor there, and said, this is what I would like to do.

[35 : 12] So, he said, well, we don't take students just for short term, and this is the middle of nothing. And so, I said, well, I really only need to learn how to run the machine and how to develop the film.

He said, all right. Eventually, he said, yes, only if you promise you will not interpret the film. I said, oh, no, I wouldn't dare to do that because that's the doctor's job.

So, he taught me, he assigned me to his best technician, and she was from Austria, and I followed her everywhere in the hospital.

We went with the mobile x-ray machines and so on, but the patients would come down to the x-ray department. And she taught me everything. And this doctor, when he was free, when I look back on it now, I think he must have been a Christian, because in the evenings when he was free, he said to me, Joan, I'm free tonight, I can help you, and he would also give me classes.

So, it was really great how the Lord just took care of all that training for me. And so, in three months, I finished, I didn't get a certificate or anything, of course, it was only three months, but I did learn how to run the machine and to take x-rays and off I went to India.

[36 : 29] Yeah, so that was quite an experience. I mean, just even getting to India, tell us how that was.

This is 1956, September, right? That's right. And if you remember your history at that time, in 1956, Egypt was having a lot of trouble with the Suez Canal.

Well, friends of mine, you might know them actually, Margaret and Eric Lowe, Eric Lowe was a priest at St. on 41st Avenue. Yes, he's now retired.

That's why he's retired. He's living in Whitewell now. Anyway, they actually, they're Anglicans, but they applied and went with BMMF, which is the Bible Medical Missionary Fellowship.

So Bible was Eric's part, and medical was Margaret, and she was a nurse. So they were accepted to go with the BMMS, and they went to India. But they were in the boat ahead of me, and they got to the Suez Canal, all right.

[37 : 35] I was in the boat behind them. We got stopped at Malta by the P&O; office and said, don't go any further, because at that time, the Suez was blocked.

we were anchored outside Malta for about three days. We were not allowed off the ship, and we could see what was going on on land, but we couldn't get off.

Then the word came from England, said, all right, you can't go to the Suez, you have to back out, and we went around the Cape. So instead of taking three weeks, we took six weeks to get to India.

And she had a tour, a tour of Africa. That was my first experience on a cruise ship. Six weeks. But it was wonderful.

The ship was full of missionaries, and every morning we had Bible study. So we know where Canberra is. What was the mission like?

[38 : 36] This was a mission station. because, you know, as I understand it, when you first went there, there was no running water, certainly no flush toilets or baths, but you were well taken care of, nevertheless.

When I arrived, there was already the principal of the girls school, Dr. Hazard, been chartered the hospital, and then there was a nursing superintendent of Canada, and then there was Dr.

Constance Jackson, who ran the village clinics, she went out daily in her vans, and there was Marion Naptress, who was doing the village work, and she ran the village schools, and did evangelism.

And then there was a nurse, who was the goddaughter of Dr. Haslam. So there were already six people there from Canada, actually, Dr.

Haslam's goddaughter came from England, actually, and then I was number seven. So there were not enough rooms, they all had single rooms at that time, but Mary and I, the youngest nurse, and then I was the next one, we shared a room.

[39 : 46] But it was a big, huge room, those mission bungalows were big, old-fashioned rooms, and we had lots of space and lots of cupboards and so on. And so even though there was no running water, and what was it, no, no flush toilets.

We didn't have electricity, no flush toilets, but everything we each had our own little do thing, and it was kept very clean. We had cleaners who came before breakfast and cleaned it out, so that by the time we, before we got up actually, and so by the time we got up, we had a clean potty to use, and then after breakfast they came and cleaned it again, so that when we came up for lunch from the hospital it was clean.

So it was like that, very well organized, because the missionaries had been there for all these years, you know, it was very well run. And then for hot water, the water had to be carried up.

Our hospital was 3,000 feet up from the city, so the water carriers for the hospital, I don't know how many we had, and they had water carriers for the school, and they had water carriers for the mission work and so on, and for the hospital patients.

So we had water carriers going up and down the hill five or six times a day with kerosene tins, and they carried a stick on their shoulders. And they would go down to the town where there was a well, and would bring the water up six or seven times a day for us and for the patients and for everybody.

[41 : 19] And then for the bath, we used galvanized tin tubs that people used to wash the clothes in, so I was small, I could almost stretch out for not quite.

But Dr. Haslam and the other people were much taller. Can you imagine stretching out in a galvanized tin? give us a sense of a typical day when you arrived.

As I understand it, you were up early, and I know at the end of the day you all got dressed for dinner, but what happened in between? Okay, the hospital started at 8.30 with hospital staff prayer, so we had to have breakfast at 7.30, so I would get up at 6.30 in order to get ready and have my quiet time and everything to be ready for breakfast at 7.30.

Then we would go down and have staff prayers at 8.30, then we'd begin rounds, the doctor would go through. So there was the maternity ward, the medical ward, the surgical ward, and the private wards.

And the hospital was for women only, women and children. And we did have private rooms where we did admit men, but they had to have money to pay for it.

[42 : 35] But all the women, we charged them very little, almost nothing. Which maybe, when I think of it, and that was how missions were not, the Anger Commission wasn't the only one that ran it that way, all the other groups of missionaries they ran it that way because there was money coming from Canada or the United States or wherever.

There was money coming. And so they could afford Locke to charge the patient. The idea was to reach out to them. But in retrospect, I think that was a bad thing to do because they did not learn how to become independent.

They relied on the mission. How did you entertain yourselves? There was no TV.

phones were non-existent. Letters took six weeks, at least, probably. At least. After rounds, we'd go down and see the outpatients.

Outpatients, after finishing rounds, would be from, say, something like 9.30 until we saw all the patients. We handed out tickets and we did not stop handing out until everybody got a ticket.

[43 : 56] But there was a deadline. I think the deadline was to stop handing out tickets at 12.30 or something. So often we'd be down at outpatient until 1.30, something like that.

Then we'd come up for lunch. And then if there was any operation booked, the surgical staff, the doctors and the nurses and so on, would be involved with the surgery.

And because I was a nurse or anything, I was not involved, but I would finish my lab work in the afternoon. Then at 4, we would have tea. And then after tea, we'd go down for evening rounds and saw more outpatients.

By that time, we would be finished maybe about 5.30 or something like that. That was the day. And then now, back to how did I spend the time? Well, you know, we didn't have TV.

I think TV was just coming in. And even, never mind the TV, no one even had a radio. But they had lots of records, LPs, the big ones.

[44 : 57] And there was a good selection of records. There was a very good library of old books there. And so, and then I think Scrabble was the main sort of entertainment of the evening, lots of time.

And we'd sit around knitting, knitting. And at Christmas time, I don't know when they started it, but one of the missionaries brought up a loom, a simple loom. And before Christmas, they would start doing it in maybe September, October.

And we would buy the wool and we would weave scarves for all the servants, men and women. And so that took up a lot of time in the winter at the time. And somehow, those missionaries learned how to play mahjong.

I never did. But they did. But somehow, if somebody brought a mahjong set, that was another thing that they did. Or we would sit around and write letters.

And that's how we spent our time. And you began language training within six months of your arriving. There was more than one language that you were expected to learn, wasn't there?

[46 : 09] I mean, how many? There was, there was, weren't there three different languages? The local people's hill dialect, which is not a written language. It's just local.

And it changes every 15 kilometers. So, there was that, the local dialect, the hill dialect. Then there was the language of the country, before partition was Urdu and English in the courts.

That's what the British people used. But after partition in 1945, then the Hindus said, well, we can't have that. That's the Muslim language. We can't have that. And so, they said, we must have our own language.

So, they changed court language, became Hindi and English. English. But, what I learned was a combination of Hindi and Urdu called Hindustani. And we used the Hindi script, which was a great blessing, because the Urdu script is like Persian.

It's not squirrely, like that. And you go from, yeah, you go from right to left. And the Hindi went from left to right, like English. So, much easier to learn. So, I learned Hindustani for two years.

[47 : 17] And the third year, I switched to Punjabi, because that was the language that was closest to the Hill dialect. Because the Hill dialect had no written language, but their words sounded very similar to the Punjabi that the people in Vancouver areas speak now, the States.

And so, I had to learn Punjabi to learn the Hill dialect. And the rule was that we had to pass three language exams. And if we did not pass it, then we were not sent back for another term.

Because, after all, our purpose there in India was to communicate. So, we had to learn the language if we wanted to go back again. So, that was...

And then... So, we would spend... April, May, June, July, August.

We came back down to the station at the end of August. We went up to the Hill Station to the language school. And there we met all kinds of missionaries from many parts of the world.

[48 : 22] Americans, Germany, anywhere from Europe, and Canadians, and so on. And from all different backgrounds. It was really wonderful. It was like an expat community up there in the Hill Station.

And we were all sent there, new folks especially. And also, there was a missionary kids' school up there. So, the parents would go up there in the summer to get away from the heat.

And so, we were there, up there, about five months learning the language. And then, because there were two of us learning the language in Congra, we were allowed to hire one of those language teachers to bring him back to our station.

So, when we went back to Congra, in the afternoon after the morning work was finished, Mary and I would each have one hour's lesson separately. I would have one hour, then she would have one hour.

So, that's how we learned our language. That's great. I'm just aware of the time. Oh, my goodness. We're going to have to hop, skip, and jump here. One of the things that I wanted to know was what sustained you during your many years away?

[49 : 37] Because there must have been challenges. There were challenges and there were hard times, and there were times when you feel very much alone. Because, I mean, the senior missionaries after all were seniors, and Mary and I were about the same age, and then, so, we were about the same age, but the next age would be ten years older than us, and the age from that person to the next, each group was about ten years in between.

So, the only sort of closeness that we had was in the evenings, we'd get together and sit in a little sitting room, and as Beth has mentioned, it was very sort of like English style, we'd dress up for meals.

You know, you didn't come to meals in your uniform, in your hospital coat or anything. We got washed up and we had dressed up. So, but there were times when, you know, even though you're born a Christian, there were times when you think, well, they don't understand you.

I mean, that's nothing new, really. Aren't there children and family today? My mother doesn't understand me. It's that sort of feeling. But language school was a big help, because there you met missionaries of all ages, and it was a great fellowship, yeah.

That's supportive. That's great. I am going to skip along, because you came home on furlough every five years, and then, and were being supported by a number of churches.

[51 : 34] But after 21 years, or at least after 16 years, the Anglican Church of Canada, which had supported the hospital and Congress since 1907, announced that they wanted to withdraw financial support.

And so, you were home on furlough, and India was your home. What did you do when we came home?

Well, yeah, I mean, you heard about the fact that they were not going to fund Congra Hospital anymore. What did you decide to do then?

Well, you know, that was a very hard thing, but it came very unexpected. None of us were expecting that the work would close down just like that.

I was the very last one to leave in 1971. I was supposed to stay home. Dr. Hasling left three or four years before that, and she was the second last one.

[52 : 45] So, and that meant all the funds from Canada was stopped. We were not told how to dispense the money that was already there, and when I was left behind, I didn't know what I was supposed to do with the money.

Nobody, you know, this is the sort of thing that we were not taught in theological college or anything like that. And so, what I did was, when I came back in 71, and I felt my work was not finished, I just prayed about it, and at that time I was still in Toronto meeting various church groups, and church army, as it was called in those days, now it's called threshold ministries, if you know any of them here in Canada.

Church army was run by Captain Taylor, who was almost one of the founders, and he said to me, Joan, church army will support you for the next five years.

So because of that, I was able to go back for five more years, and so in those five years I really had to pray and think and ask God, what do I do now, and close it down gradually.

And so in those five years, the doctors in the hospital began to charge the patients a little more each, sort of every six months, if they increased the fees.

[54 : 08] And so in the five years, the patients got used to paying a little bit more than they used to when they were paying almost nothing. And today, the hospital is self-supporting.

They support four doctors. We had Christian nurses, now that's the sad thing about that. The Christian nurses all stopped applying to go to work at the Maple Leaf Hospital, because Congress is very isolated.

It's not a big city, and there's nothing for them. There's no way for them to advance. So the Christian girls did not apply to come and work at Congress.

They went to the larger hospitals in the plains. So what were they supposed to do for nurses? The doctor is there now, very smart, actually.

They engaged local girls. They were Hindus. But I got to visit them in 2004, and I thought to myself, and I attended prayer, you know, these are Hindu girls.

[55 : 12] How are they supposed to teach anything about Jesus? And yet they were supposed to lead patients' prayers. That was really sad. And so what happened then, somehow this doctor from the southern part of India started, when they started hiring these Hindu girls, he started a nursing school.

They're on the website now, and the last picture I saw, the nurses were nicely dressed in uniforms and all, but still no Christian teaching. That is the really sad thing about the whole thing.

And I would really like all you to remember that in prayer, because this work was begun by the Church Missionary Society of England in the 1800s.

Then there was this earthquake in 1905, and all the Church of England work was destroyed. The school, the hospital, the church, everything was ruined with the earthquake.

That was when, Canadian Church got under the scene in 1907, the first Canadian missionary was Cameron and Mrs. Haslam from Toronto.

[56 : 29] And they went and started the, he was the director of the church, she was a doctor, and that's how Maybeleague Hospital started. She started seeing patients on the veranda of her house outside as outpatient.

Then she felt she had to admit them, so she put a cot on the outside of her veranda, and that was one cot, and two cot, and three cot, and then there was not enough space on her veranda anymore, so she had to build a little room.

And when I got to Maple Leaf Hospital in 1956, the hospital was like a rabbit board. You didn't go straight from one room to the other out. You had to go sort of winding in and out, and double back and all that sort of thing.

But the hospital was well run, and the mission doctors were well respected. There is still a government hospital at the town level, but the patients would rather climb up 3,000 feet to the mission hospital because they knew they were loved there, and they knew they were to get treatment there.

But unfortunately, they were getting Christian teaching. Now this is something, you know, church missionary society started in 18-something, end of it. Yet today, there are very few Christians in the area.

[57 : 51] When I was there, the church was full of people every Sunday. Today, when I went there in 2004, maybe 20 people. Even the Christians who live in the city, in the town, would not come because they were older now.

They could not climb up the hills on one thing, and the younger generation did not come. That was really so sad. There are one, two, three, four Christian families living in Congress, and when I was there, two from those families came, two younger people, but that was it.

This brings up another discussion, but I'm going to, because time has passed, I'm going to just ask my last question. There's much more in between leaving India and where you are right now, but just to close off, you've served the Lord all your life.

It's been an amazing life. Looking back, what kernel of wisdom do you have for us? Well, I have two favorite scripts.

One is, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. So, in other words, the Lord is my shepherd, what else do I need? So remember that.

[59 : 24] And the other one is, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and what's the following? All these things will be added unto you. So, the idea is, put God first in your life, and don't worry about anything else.

God will take care of it. This morning I was worrying, oh God, what shall I do? And so the Lord said, well you don't have to do anything, I'm going to do it for you. Okay.

So we'll just, you may have questions, and there's certainly more to say, but I think we should just close off now, because I see the clock, and give people an opportunity to ask questions.

Thank you. applause You Thank you.