

## **MY LIFE STORY**

### **By LAURN KEMP BEUTLER**



I am now 32 years of age as I start to write events of the past which have been a part of my present attitudes, development, character, and personality. I am now living at Pendleton, Oregon, and working at the Pendleton Branch Experiment Station as a research agronomist. This was my first job out of college. I graduated in Agronomy from Utah State University (Logan) in 1957.

Life has been kind and good to me so far, and surely I must say the Lord has blessed me. I now have a loving wife, Ruth, and two sweet daughters and a fair job. We have strong testimonies of the truthfulness of the restored gospel and are giving of our time and efforts in trying to aid in the building up of God's Kingdom here on earth. We are soundly convinced that the greatest good that we can do here on earth is the bringing of people to an understanding and appreciation of the great eternal plan of true joy and happiness. It is our sincere desire that all of our descendants will consider these things prayerfully and search for those things of most eternal worth.

I was born of Walter Beutler and Loverrill Kemp on March 4, 1930 in Dayton, Idaho. This was the year of the great depression and my parents were just starting out as farmers in Idaho. I am the second child of a family of eight children; I have one older sister, Blanche. My parents started on the farm with very little material possessions. They had one team of horses to do the farm work, two milk cows to give a little cash income, and they lived in an old chicken coop. They separated the milk into cream and skim milk. The cream was sold for income and they drank the skim milk. I remember Dad said they were so poor that first year that they fed the horses straw in order for the cows to have alfalfa hay so they would produce more milk.

#### **Boyhood Stories**

My memory of life at home starts with my pre-school years of ages four and five. I remember we drove a 1930 Chevy car, of which we were justly proud. It was necessary to crank it by hand to start it, but it was a luxury to us. We sometimes journeyed some 30 miles on special occasions to visit our grandparents, Beutler and Kemp. I remember Dad saying the grandparents helped a great deal those first years on the farm. They gave them the horses and cows to get started in the farming business.

Our family grew in number over the years to eight children, five girls and three boys. The order of birth was Blanche, Laurin, Hazel, Virginia, Ethel, Margaret, Henry, and Sheldon. So I grew up for the most part with a lot of sisters.

#### **A Runaway**

One of the first vivid memories of my early childhood was a wild runaway wagon ride. It was a warm spring day before I was old enough to attend school. Dad had been breaking a young horse named Queen to the harness and teaching her to work as a draft horse. She was a beauty and as energetic as young horses can be. Old Toni was her mate. He was slow and steady and never showed any emotion at all. Life must have seemed drudgery to him and "Spring Fever" must not have invaded his old bones because nothing seemed to arouse him or to quicken his pace. My dad had hooked his team to the old iron-wheeled wagon with the gravel box on it. This wagon was similar to the wagons the Mormon pioneers traveled to Utah in and was a hard ride. It was without springs or rubber tires and you could count every rut in the road when you rode in it.

Our mailbox was a mile down the road and dad had invited us kids to take a ride with him to get the mail. It would be a training exercise for Queen and a fun ride for kids. There was Blanche, myself, Hazel and Virginia

as a baby. On the way over to the mailbox we sat on the floor of the wagon and watched as Dad drove the team. Queen was anxious to pull but Toni was lazy and was willing to let her pull most of the load. This irritated my dad because a team was to pull equally. He urged Toni forward with a slap of the reins but he soon slowed back and let Queen pull the load. After getting the mail, we started on our way home but Toni still continued his lazy ways. He ignored every shouted command that was given and slowly ambled down the gravel road. About half way home there was a large willow tree with flexible switches. My dad stopped the wagon and said, "Here Laurin, hold the reins tightly while I cut a switch." Toni turned his head as to see past his blinders as he watched dad cut the switch. I could imagine the cogs begin to turn in his brain and I knew he was deciding not to stay around for the entertainment.

Toni started forward though I was pulling back on the reins with all my might. Queen followed him because of her inexperience and soon they were going down the road at a full gallop. The wagon was bouncing and as I looked back at my sisters, I could see five inches of daylight under them at each big bounce. I could hear Dad hollering, "Pull on the reins! Pull on the reins!"

Old Toni had been traded from a neighbor farm up the road two miles that year, so he was headed to his old home. As I looked back toward our house I remember seeing dad cranking our 1930 Chevy. The reins in my hands were getting slick from the cold sweat. I was pulling on the reins with all my might but the left rein was short and it slipped from my hand. But I continued to pull on the remaining rein which prevented the horses from turning left which was necessary because of a jog in the fence that bordered the road. So when they reached the jog they had to stop. Our neighbor saw us coming down the road and ran out to hold the horses and then Dad drove up in the car. We all were very relieved to have this runaway come to a safe conclusion.

### **Milking Cows**

After I was 9 years old, I was included in helping with the morning and evening chores. Our biggest job was milking the cows. Dad and Uncle Ernest farmed as partners and milked about 20 Guernsey cows twice daily. This was a big job when you milked them by hand. You would put a bucket under the cow's udder and sit on a one-legged stool and squeeze and pull. It is an art and skill to milk cows by hand but the three of us made the harvest twice daily. I would milk five cows while Dad and Uncle Ernest milked the remainder. I also fed the calves and cranked on the cream separator. The separator would spin the milk up in a cone and cause the cream to separate from the skim milk. We fed the skim milk to the calves and the pigs and we sold the cream for cash.

Most of our cows were docile and well-behaved but every once in awhile we had one that would kick. Our worst cow was a red Durham that we named Hitler because she was so mean. She was nervous and would try to kick while you milked her, but worst of all she would kick if you walked behind her. One night I had finished milking my cows and was waiting for Dad to finish his. I absent-mindedly stood behind old Hitler. She kicked like a mule with both hind feet, hitting me right in my stomach knocking me across the barn floor. Dad picked me up, as I was dizzy. He asked me to point to the light bulb and I pointed in the wrong direction so he took me to the house and I went to bed. I was okay the next morning, but Dad sold Hitler that day. He figured she'd make better hamburger than being a milk cow.

In order to help pass the time we would sing songs while milking. Dad and Uncle Ernest would harmonize with some old favorites and I learned to sing along. I think this is where I learned to enjoy singing. Even the cows didn't seem to mind. In later years, we put a radio in the barn and listened to music and other programs. I remember listening to the Joe Louis fights while milking cows.

### **Farming with Horses**

In 1938 I was 8 years old and started to learn how to drive a team of draft horses doing some farm operations. These were large animals weighing 2000 pounds each that were trained to work as teams of two. They were generally obedient and kind animals and seemed to willingly devote their strength to many hard farm tasks. I

drove these teams all day mowing alfalfa hay. We had a mower which cut a five-foot swath. If I worked a ten-hour day, I could cut ten acres. Also, we cultivated, plowed, hauled hay and sugar beets with horsepower.

It was amazing to see how much a good team could pull. One of our best teams was named Queen and Coalie and they could pull a five-ton load of sugar beets out of a muddy field. They were great pullers and fast trotters. Once on the road they would travel fast to the receiving station and back to the field.

There are many stories I could tell about horses but I'll relate one about hauling alfalfa hay on a wagon. We had two teams and two wagons in the field with which we hauled hay. We would park one wagon in the field while we loaded the other one and then we could take two loads to the barn at a time. One day as we loaded the first wagon we parked Nig and Duke. They were a big black team; they were easy going and slow to get excited so they would stand and sleep while we loaded the first wagon. It was a very warm summer day and the heat caused the rubber tires to heat up and expand. One of the tires blew out making a loud bang. It so startled Nig and Duke that they bolted across the field until they crossed an irrigation ditch. They were going so fast that it broke the tongue out of the wagon but they continued to run toward the barn. (A horse will always go to the barn in a runaway.) When we got there, they were standing by the barn.

## **Tractors**

My dad preferred machinery over animals. He often lost patience with animals so when tractors were invented he was anxious to get one. His first tractor was one he made from an old truck frame. He shortened the frame and put two transmissions back to back to lower the gear ratio. I remember that spring he did the plowing with the tractor rather than the horses. It worked pretty well but the engine would get very hot with steam coming out of the radiator and it looked like a steam tractor but he still preferred it over the horses. He bought our first commercially made tractor in 1940. It was an Allis-Chalmers Model "B". It was a small tractor with 24-horse power. We used it for everything on the farm. The horses began to get more and more rest as the tractors replaced many of the farming tasks. Dad eventually bought a second tractor and in about ten years the tractor basically replaced the horses. So the horses were turned out to pasture and farming took on a new and faster pace.

We were proud of our model "B" Allis-Chalmers but it was interesting to see what other kinds of tractors our neighbors had. One spring one of our church members, Joe Hansen, had a broken leg so we all went to Hansens one day to help with the spring work. There were eight tractors—Fords, Allis-Chalmers, Farmalls, Oliver's and John Deeres---plowing a field together. They all had about the same horse-power and speed and worked together very well.

One thing about farm life is that you started driving tractors at an early age. Even my sisters learned to drive the tractors for some activities. When Sheldon was age five, he could drive a tractor. He drove the tractor when we were loading hay onto the wagon. He would slide down off the seat so he could depress the clutch and shift it into gear and then as he let the clutch out, he would emerge up on the seat to steer the tractor to the next stop.

## **School Days in Dayton, Idaho**

Our little farming community had its own elementary school up through the eighth grade. There were four or five teachers who usually taught two grades each. There was a principal who also taught and kept things in order. We all had a little fear of being sent to his office because of the wooden paddle which he had in a handy place, but I only remember of one student it was used on.

My mom took me to school the first day of my first grade. My teacher was Miss Phillips who also had grown up in Dayton. She was a loving and kind teacher. My memories of those early years were good and we were being taught very well. We rode the school bus each day which took about one hour to make its' route. I

enjoyed most of my schoolmates and continued to attend school with most of them through high school; then we all seemed to separate as life led us in different directions.

I was 11 years old in 1941 when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt declared war with Japan and also Germany. That was a big concern to everyone; the young men were taken into the service and people were very concerned about the war and all the problems it caused. The war continued until I was 15 (1945). During that time some of my uncles were fighting in the war. One, Uncle Alma Beutler was killed while fighting in the Pacific on a battleship.

Our high school was at Weston, Idaho, which was about ten miles to the south of Dayton. It had students from five small farming communities along the west side of the valley. I attended my freshman year at Weston and then the schoolhouse burned down one night, so our school was moved to Clifton, Idaho, about seven or eight miles to the north, where I finished the next three years. There were 30 in my graduating class so we were a small school. The small size was an advantage if you wanted to participate in sports but a disadvantage for a choice in classes and preparing for college.

I enjoyed playing basketball and football. I did best at basketball and played on the varsity team my last two years. Those were fun years in school and sports and discovering girls. I dated a little the last two years of school but I was never serious with anyone.

I owned two riding horses during my teenage years. I worked and saved my money so I could buy my first colt. I named her Baldie because she had a white strip on her face. She was half-Arabian and half-wild Mustang. She was a three year-old when Dad and I bought her from Uncle Ed Beutler. He had tried to break her to ride but she had bucked him off. Dad said, "I can show you how to break her to ride." I taught her to lead and fed her and brushed her every day and she soon became tame. I bought a saddle and I would put it on her to let her get used to it on her back.

When we started to ride her, we didn't want her to buck us off (as a horse can get bad habits), so Dad harnessed a big workhorse (Nig) who was twice her size. We took her halter rope and tied her head up high on the hame of Nig's harness. If a horse can't get their head down, they can't buck. So Dad led Nig and Baldie had to follow with me riding her. After riding around the farm a couple of hours, she got the idea not to even try to buck. After that first day, I rode Baldie alone and taught her to rein and obey my commands. It was fun and by the end of the summer, she became a reliable mount.

Baldie was a fast horse and several of my friends would challenge me to a race and she never lost. The mountains were only three miles away so we would often take a Saturday ride. After a couple of years, I sold Baldie to my neighbor and bought my second colt when I was 17. I named him "Poncho". He was a nice-looking horse as well and was an American Saddle breeding. I broke him to ride and I continued to own him until after Ruth and I were married. When Lorilee was born, I sold him to a nice family and used the money to pay the hospital bill.

### **After High School**

Life seemed rather uncomplicated up until this time in my life. Now I had to begin to plan for a life of my own. I wanted to go to college in the Fall of 1949 but Dad needed my service on the farm so I waited until winter quarter to start. College life was a disappointment as it was lonely and seemed to demand more than I was willing to give so I worked on the farm that spring and summer.

As I was nearing my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, I knew I would be asked to go on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although I believed in the Church and knew of its goodness I could not say of a surety it was the true church of Jesus Christ. So during my eighteenth year I accepted the challenge of the prophet Moroni (*Moroni 10:4-5*) of the Book of Mormon. I knew I must seek and study to know the truth and then pray for holy

guidance. I began to read the Book of Mormon prayerfully since I felt it was the most tangible evidence that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that he saw and communicated with God the father and his son Jesus Christ.

I found the Book of Mormon most interesting but had not yet a firm testimony until one day as I read I stopped and petitioned the Savior to make known to me if this book had a divine origin. I have never forgotten that peaceful feeling as the Holy Ghost filled my body. I had a sense of a burning feeling and a peaceful confidence that the book was true and that its origin was divine. I was now ready to serve a mission if called.

### **Called on a Mission**

I received my call to serve in the Eastern Canadian Mission with the headquarters in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. I was enthused about a mission and I entered the mission training home in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 17, 1950. We were trained for two weeks to prepare us to represent the church and deliver its message about the restored gospel. At the end of the training, I was set apart by Levi E. Young, one of the Seven Presidents of Seventy. He blessed me with health and strength and cautioned me not to be contentious and realize that people have strong feelings about religion. He said, "Elder Beutler, you will labor your whole mission and not baptize a soul into the church, but be not discouraged because you will teach many people who will later join the church." My parents were there and after we left the room, I said to Dad, "There isn't much point of me going on a mission if I'm not to baptize anyone." He said, "Oh yes there is, your job is to teach people; some must sow and some must cultivate and some must reap. Your job is to preach the gospel." This proved to be prophetic, try as I may to bring people into the waters of baptism, I always got a transfer whenever we had people ready to join the church.

Forty-six years later, I received a letter from a Donald Crawford from Etobecoke, Ontario, Canada. He asked if I was the Laurin K. Beutler who was a Mormon missionary that had knocked on his mother's door in Ajax, Ontario in 1952? I remembered Mrs. Crawford and her young family as we were studying with them. Donald was age 14 at that time. It was a thrill to learn of some people we had contacted and who later joined the church. In his letter he said, "Laurin, if you have ever wondered about your mission and how effective you were or if you did any good, consider these facts. Because of Elders Laurin K. Beutler and David Clark Brown who knocked on my mother's door in 1952 there are 19 happy, active members of the Church who appreciate the fact you gave up two years of your young lives to spread the Gospel. Also consider the fact that there are literally hundreds of my ancestors beyond the veil who have accepted the Gospel and are recipients of your missionary service as well."

There were eight of us who traveled by train to Toronto. After the first day we stopped in Denver at the mission home and started off to Chicago the next morning. It was a good trip as we all rode together enjoying each others company. It was interesting to see the countryside. We had a short three-hour layover in Chicago and then on to Toronto, Canada. We stayed at the mission home that night and then we were assigned our fields of labor. My assignment was to Timmins, Ontario. It was north 500 miles up by Hudson Bay. It took two days by train. It seemed to stop at every big tree, but I finally arrived and was met by my new companion, Elder Jones, and a few members of the branch. Timmins had a small group of about a dozen members. Timmins was a town of about 30,000 people. The main source of income was gold mining. After two months, Elder Jones received word his father had died of a heart attack and so he was released to go home and my new companion was Foss Sessions from Idaho Falls. He and I got along very well and worked together for four months and then I was transferred to Montreal and worked with Elder James M. James. Elder James was my favorite companion. He and I enjoyed each other's companionship very much and we stayed in touch over the years since our missions.

Montreal is a very large city whose population is about two-thirds French-speaking. They can also speak English except if you want to discuss religion and then they ask, "Parlez-vous francais?" so we mainly worked with the English-speaking people. The elders here held street meetings every Sunday night downtown in the square. This was certainly a new and different experience. It was so noisy with traffic and we would usually

get a crowd of 10-15 people but I never thought it was very productive. The Catholic Church was very strong there and the priests were feared by the members to the point that they wouldn't read the Book of Mormon until they asked the priest; hence we had little success with the French. Montreal had a large branch with a lot of fine church members. I labored in this area for eight months and with two companions, Elder James and Elder Clay.

My third field of labor was Oshawa, Whitby and Ajax, Ontario. Elder Gudmundson and I worked mainly in Whitby with very little success. We were only together a month and he was transferred and Elder David Clark Brown and I worked together. We decided to travel by bus to a new small government town of Ajax. We had a warm welcome there and enjoyed teaching a lot of good young families. We worked in Ajax for nine months. Elder Brown and I both had the same desire to work hard and teach all who would listen. We taught many wonderful families.

My last place of labor was in Brantford with Elder Edwards. We met and taught some very good people and also spent a lot of time with the branch affairs. Dad had written and asked me to look up one of his Niederhauser cousins who lived in Kitchener, Ontario. We took a bus to the town and went to the Lutheran Church to inquire about her. Her minister said she had died about two years ago, but he said "You will probably be interested in a book her father compiled about his Swiss family roots." We were directed to Mr. Bob Hallman who lived out in the small town of New Dundee. After finding Mr. Hallman, I informed him that I was a cousin of Miss Niederhauser and we had learned of her death and of a family record and we wondered how we could get a copy. He was very friendly and gave us a copy of the book. It was history with names, dates and places. I took it home to Dad and he said it was full of valuable genealogy of the Niederhauser family.

I was released from my mission on May 8, 1952. I was invited to ride home with Elder Lowe. His parents had purchased a new car in Detroit and he was to drive it home. We stopped to see Nauvoo, Illinois and the Carthage Jail where Joseph Smith was martyred. These were two very inspirational places. In three days I was home again with the family. The kids had all grown so much and it was great to be back.

I did stop and report my mission to Clifford E. Young and he told me to expect to be drafted into the army because of the Korean War. My mission was a good and great experience. I grew so much in knowledge, testimony and appreciation and I recommend it to any of my descendants.

### **Drafted in the Army**

After returning home from a mission, I knew it was a matter of a few weeks until I would receive my letter from Uncle Sam inviting me to serve in his army. I got a job working on an erosion control dam they were building on Deep Creek which bordered dad's farm on two sides. We wired steel reinforcing rod together and built forms to pour concrete to make the flue pipe which was placed under the dam. I worked here for about ten weeks until I received my draft notice.

On September 2, 1952, three of us returned missionaries went to Salt Lake City for our physicals for induction into the army. Two of them failed the examination and were classified as 4F so they were not inducted, but I passed so they loaded us on a bus and sent us to Fort Ord, California for basic training. It was 16 weeks of interesting experiences. The first thing I noticed was the vulgarity of the language used. The air was blue with four-letter words that I hadn't heard in two years and many that I had never heard before. The soldiers were from all over the United States and from all races of mankind. It was interesting to talk to people from different areas and backgrounds. A few people had decent standards, but most did not.

They lined us up to go get our army-issued clothes and then marched us over to the barbershop where we got a free haircut. It took less than one minute per soldier with the clippers and then we were all wearing the same GI hair cut. This was all to teach us that they were in control and we were to learn discipline and say, "Yes Sir." We were taught to march in step, about our health, about weapons of war, about KP, and mainly how to take commands and do our duty as soldiers. Our platoon sergeant was a colored-man with very little education but

he was smart and a good soldier. He would say, “Mens, there are two kinds of soldiers—the quick and the dead, so learn to be quick.” I found this had a lot of truth in it and may be of value in other aspects of life. One night we were on maneuvers in a war game and we were asked to dig a two-man foxhole and stand guard all night. It was very cold and the soldier I was with decided he would build a little shelf to crawl under, down in the bottom of the foxhole so he could stay warm. I didn’t think it would be a good idea, but he wouldn’t have it any other way so when it was my turn to stand guard, he would crawl down in his shelf and sleep. All of a sudden the whole side of the foxhole fell in on him burying him alive. I began to dig as fast as I could but it took me about a minute and a half before I found one of his arms and pulled him out. He was gasping for air and I remembered, “the quick and the dead.”

I wrote a letter home every week while I was in the army to keep my family updated. Mother saved all of my letters and gave them to me years later and I have them in a loose-leaf binder, so, much of this information was taken from these letters.

Our 16 weeks was soon coming to an end and we were all anxious to know where they would send us. It was either to Korea to fight in the war, or to Germany where there was peace. My orders came and I was to be shipped to Korea. At about the same time there was a request for volunteers to enter a six weeks school in the Intelligence part of the army. There were about ten of us decided this may be a good deal and we would probably be stationed somewhere behind the front lines in a soft job. We couldn’t have been more wrong. When we arrived at Alameda, California we found out they were training us to write coded letters from prison-of-war camps. What a bad decision, we were now guaranteed a spot on the front line where we were more likely to get captured. After this school ended we were sent to Camp Stoneman to be shipped out through the San Francisco Bay to Korea.

### **On the USN Collins Troupe Ship**

We were loaded on the Collins in route for Japan on May 27, 1953. There were 5,000 soldiers on board and it did seem crowded. I was assigned a bunk in the bow of the ship. We were crowded together five bunks high. We were in a storm and the ocean was rough. The bow moved up and down and rolled sideways. Most of the men were seasick and our living quarters were polluted with seasick men. My stomach was very unsettled but I never got real sick. It would take us 12 days to travel 4700 miles. After the third day the seas became much calmer. You could look 360 degrees around the horizon and all you could see was water. There were four of us together who had gone through the school at Alameda. One day they asked for volunteers to clean the hospital area. We were bored so Swift and I investigated and we surely got a deal. Because we volunteered, they offered us a nice apartment with sheets and showers for the remainder of the trip. It was in the center of the ship so we had a smooth ride the rest of the way. We arrived in Japan on June 8<sup>th</sup> and were processed and I was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in Korea.

### **In Korea**

They put me on an old train with wooden seats heading north to my assigned division. It was interesting seeing the countryside and rice patties terraced up in the mountainsides. We spent our first night in the rear. They gave us bunks in tents and we were getting ready to retire when all of a sudden artillery rounds were falling all around us. The Chinese were letting us know that they knew we had arrived. The next morning we were taken to our assigned Companies. Most of us went to King Company, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. King Company had lost most of their men in a bloody battle the night before and we were replacing the dead and wounded. This was scary and we had a sudden realization that there was a real war in Korea where people were getting killed.

I had many experiences in the war and became acquainted with many soldiers from all over the United States. One of my best buddies was Edward Rodriguez from California. He and I seemed to stay together all of our time in Korea. I’ll tell a few stories of my time over there.

## **Humorous**

We were moving across some rice paddies after a rainstorm and the mud was sticky and deep. It was rather funny watching the guy in front of you sliding down a hill and then level out in mid-air and come down sliding with all of his equipment. I watched my buddy, Ed, fall down four times trying to get up a bank. I laughed so hard that I was weak. He finally made it to the top and said, "Here, let me help you up." I stretched out my hand and he handed me a big handful of mud.

After the truce was signed and we were at peace, some of us were assigned to take the jeeps down to the river and give them a wash job. This river was about 100 yards wide and about 12 inches deep. After we had finished washing all the vehicles, one of the guys was having fun driving around the river at a good pace. All of a sudden he and the jeep dropped out of sight. He had driven in a deep hole and it took us a while to get a cable on the jeep and pull it out.

## **The Atheist**

When Bill found out I had been a missionary, he enjoyed having long discussions on the question, "Is there a God?" He would say there is no God; man is here by chance and evolution. I would say that there is a God who has organized this earth and put the balance in nature. He would say, "If there were a God, why would the earth be such a painful place?" I would counter that we are here with a divine plan made to give us experience. And so went our discussions until one night we found ourselves in the same foxhole during a scary artillery attack. The rounds were coming in very close and with great explosions. I looked over at Bill and he was praying in a very sincere manner. The next day I said, "Bill, I noticed you were praying last night." He said, "Yes, I was scared and I thought I'd better pray just in case there is a God."

## **Prompted by the Holy Spirit**

I believe my life was preserved by a divine power. We had been up all night standing guard (as the Chinese fought only at night). It had been cold and rainy and this kind of weather is very miserable in a foxhole. The next morning the sun began to shine in welcome rays. It was June of 1953 and the day's warm sun was a welcome change. Usually we would sleep in our foxhole, but the sun felt so good I decided to lie beside the foxhole and soak in the sun. It should have been safe as we were on the reverse slope of the mountain out of sight of the enemy; at least I thought so. Apparently, a Chinese artillery observer was on higher ground behind us and could see me sleeping in the sun. I had slept for about three hours and it was nearing noon. I was awakened by an audible voice to my mind, "It's time to get up and go to chow." It was repeated twice and I was amazed at this strong prompting so I arose from my resting spot, leaving my rifle and walked down the hill about 25 paces to get my eating utensils. As I bent over to get my gear, a loud explosion occurred. The Chinese had fired a 61-MM mortar round at me and it had hit the direct spot where I had laid a few seconds before. My rifle was blown to bits and I was wounded behind my left ear by the exploding shell. Had I not been prompted by an unseen power, my life would have ended that day.

## **The Bronze Star**

I received the "Purple Heart Medal" for being wounded and the "Bronze Star Medal" for heroic achievement in military operations against an enemy of the United States. I will quote from the general orders when I received this award on 4 February 1954.

"Corporal (then Private First Class) Laurin K. Beutler, US56132556, Infantry Company K, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, United States Army. On the afternoon of 24 July 1953, in the vicinity of Pukchong-Nyong, Korea, a patrol consisting of elements of Company K, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry, had the mission of penetrating into enemy territory in an effort to gain vital intelligence information. As the group was advancing toward the enemy emplacement, they were suddenly spotted and fired upon by numerically superior hostile forces. Corporal Beutler, a member



of the patrol, realizing the gravity of the situation, with complete disregard for his personal safety, completely exposed himself to the intense barrage and dashed up to within feet of the enemy positions where he commenced to deliver deadly effective fire upon the foe. While executing this action, the remainder of the patrol withdrew to more tenable positions and only after receiving a direct order from the patrol leader, did Corporal Beutler join the friendly forces, whereupon he voluntarily acted as a rear guard for the patrol as it withdrew to the friendly lines. Corporal Beutler's outstanding heroism and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and the military service. Entered the federal service from Idaho."

In the late summer of 1953, the Truce was signed by North Korea and the United Nations and our time was now spent in training and helping to rebuild the country. I was involved in building a schoolhouse for the Koreans. When my time was up, I was returned home by ship to the United States. My general conclusion was that this land is truly "the promised land" and I am proud to be an American. I was released from the Army and returned home by train. The train stopped at the Dayton, Idaho Station and I walked the half-mile to home. My parents, brothers and sisters and friends welcomed me. It was great to have some of my mother's warm fresh homemade bread, hot out of the oven and some 5% unprocessed Guernsey milk, a dream I had for two years!

### **College, Courtship and Marriage**

After I was honorably discharged from serving my country, I decided I should continue my education. I got a job at the Utah State College farm hoeing weeds in some of the crops research plots. The professor was impressed at how hard I worked. He said, "If you study as hard as you work, you will be a very successful student." I was then able to get a job at the Soils Laboratory where they tested soils for the farmers. This job I held all the time that I was at USU. I had saved most of my army pay so I was able to buy my first used car. It was a 1949 Desoto two-door coup. This car was a very used car and continued to give me many mechanical problems.

I chose to major in Agronomy, which is the study of crops and soils. My intentions were to buy a farm or try to find a good job in agriculture. While attending school, I attended church at the LDS Institute of Religion on campus. I met several nice girls and I enjoyed MIA dances they had every week. It was here that I met Ruth Hemsley and our courtship continued for six months. Ruth came from a farming background and she had a lot of the qualities that I admired. We attended a lot of campus dances and plays, etc. Many times we just went out for a root beer float or ice cream and sometimes a good movie. It was not long when we found ourselves mutually attracted and fell in love. Ruth had her degree and was teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade in a Logan school. In the Spring of 1955 we were engaged to be married and we were married June 7, 1955 in the Idaho Falls Temple. Ruth was a daring young thing to consider marrying a 25 year-old man who was only a sophomore in college. But I did have a part-time job at the Soils Lab and some money coming in from the GI bill, which was a gift from the US government for my serving in the army during the Korean War. Our income was \$120 a month.

We spent a few days in Yellowstone National Park on a honeymoon and then began our married life in Logan, Utah. I worked that first summer at the soils lab and Ruth continued her school teaching. We were able to save all of her salary and live on what I made. Our 1949 Desoto continued to give us problems, so after a year we had a chance to buy a good used 1954 Mercury four-door car. This was a great buy and lasted many years. Married life was great and we loved and enjoyed life together. Being married made me a much better student and I was on the honor roll for several semesters after our marriage. As I continued in school, it became apparent that buying a farm would be financially impossible, so I started to look for other employment possibilities. In the summer of 1956 I worked for the Soil Conservation Service. I wanted to get some experience and see if this kind of work was for me. I worked making soil surveys and identifying the location of different soil series. This required digging five-foot holes every 200 feet and analyzing the soil for texture, color and pH. By the end of the summer, I knew I didn't want that kind of job.

Our first baby, Lorilee, was born January 31, 1957 in the Logan hospital. A few minutes after her birth, the doctor brought her out for me to see. She was beautiful and so alert. She seemed to look around the room with

those cute little eyes as if to say, "So this is the earth life I am here to experience." So that was the end of Ruth's teaching career and the beginning of her career as a mother. Since we didn't have any health insurance and little money, I elected to sell my horse, "Poncho." Ruth had a nice lady friend who was looking for a nice horse for her boy, so we found a good home for Poncho and also paid our hospital bill.

### **Our First Job Out of College, Masters Degree and Ruth's Cancer**

I graduated with my BA degree in June of 1957 with a degree in agronomy. I looked at the jobs that were posted and didn't find any to my liking. Dr. Wade Dewey offered me a summer job with him. He was a wheat breeder and developed new varieties. He pointed me to a research job in Pendleton, Oregon. I was offered the job so we loaded our U-Haul trailer behind our car and moved to Pendleton. This was a big decision moving 600 miles from our families, but education does that to people. You have to move to where the job is that you prepared for. We found the church members very friendly and helpful. We have always appreciated the church member's wherever we have moved.

I worked at the Pendleton Branch Experiment Station. My assignment was to look for other crops that could be grown in that dry farming area. They grew wheat, barley, oats and green peas. To be employed in the research field, one needs higher training so they gave us an opportunity to continue my education one quarter a year. So for the next three years we traveled across the state to Corvallis to work on my Masters Degree.

Sherri was born at the Pendleton hospital on April 16, 1958. Ruth called me home from work when labor pains started. It didn't take long for Sherri to get here after we arrived at the hospital. Both the mother and baby were fine and Lorilee had a new sister and friend. Lorilee and Sherri were only 14 months apart and enjoyed each other's friendship as they grew up. After Sherri began to talk, her independent nature became apparent. She often would say, "I can do it myself." That characteristic has proven to be a strong asset in her life.

So, with two small children we continued to work toward a higher degree at Oregon State University in Corvallis. It was a real chore but within three years I got my masters degree in Agronomy. It was on one of these stays at Corvallis that tragedy struck our little family. Ruth had a lump show up in her breast. The doctor arranged for her to be operated on. We were not concerned because bad things only happened to other people. What a shock it was when they told us that it was malignant! The wisdom of the day was to remove the right breast and all the muscle tissue down to the rib cage. With skin grafting and all, it required two more operations. My mother came right out to stay with the babies while Ruth was in the hospital. During the next several weeks we had help from my mother, then Ruth's mother, my sister, Virginia, and Ruth's sister-in-law, Sharon. We couldn't have made it without them! Thank God for charitable saints!

The operations left Ruth without use of either arm to care for the babies. She didn't have the use of her left arm because of paralysis from her youth, and now the right arm had very little usefulness. And besides that, we did not have any medical insurance to pay the hospital. Things seemed to stack up against us, but Ruth never lost her faith and knew it would all work out. She was given a priesthood blessing by my boss, Merrill M. Oveson. He promised her that she would live to raise all her children. She reminded me of that promise many times over the years to follow.

Kind and sympathetic people surrounded us and miracles came our way. One day after the operation, some of the professors called me in to tell me about the health insurance that I had applied for. They said, "Laurn, if it's alright with you, we've decided to post date your application for health insurance so your wife will be covered for her operations." I was overcome to think that these men were willing to do that kind deed. Many of our student friends offered to help with the children until my mom could arrive. Several weeks later, we were invited by our bishop to dinner. We had just learned of the need for Ruth to take radiation treatments in Portland. This required renting an apartment close to the radiology lab for a few weeks and I didn't have the money. I asked the bishop if I could get a loan from the fasting offering fund in the church. He asked "Don't you pay your fast offering?" I said, "Yes we do." "Then, you will get sufficient funds for your needs and all

you need to do is to continue to be a good church member.” As I write this, tears well up in my eyes as I think of all the kind people and great blessings which helped us through this difficult period in our lives. People in and out of the church gave much other help in the next few months on the job and at home. Ruth and I resolved to give back some of the same kindness to others who might pass our way.

### **We Buy Our First Home**

After I had earned my masters degree, we decided to buy our first house. We purchased a three-bedroom home on a 14-acre lot and planted a large lawn and a garden. It was a good feeling not to have a landlord.

After Ruth's ordeal with the cancer operations, radiation and all, it rendered her unable to have any more children. This, however, didn't quench her desire for more children and so we sought adoption agencies as an option. One of Ruth's friends had an uncle who was looking to find parents for a baby soon to be born. This was an answer to our prayers, that we could enlarge our family. We soon received word that Judy was born in Portland, Oregon. We drove four hours to Portland and returned home with a three-day-old baby girl that would be sealed to us in the temple of the Lord. Judy was a thrill to our family. She was always a bright-eyed and alert little girl. The grandparents were equally proud of our new addition.

After a year and a half in our new home, I was informed that my job would be terminated due to a shortfall of funds. I began to look for other employment opportunities. My professors and boss at Oregon State were of great help in setting up job interviews and giving me good recommendations. I accepted an offer with the Spreckels Sugar Company in central California.

### **New Job in Fresno, California**

In the summer of 1963, we loaded our furnishings in a U-haul truck and our car and moved to Fresno, California. Our brother-in-law, Gary Bowen, helped in driving us to our new home. We rented a house for the first year. Lorilee started her schooling here. She had a real nice young teacher. We always appreciated good dedicated teachers for our children. Fresno was a nice city and Spreckels a good employer. They never paid very high, but they did allow us to use the company car for our family also. After a year we bought a home on Mariposa Street. It was a nice neighborhood and the girls were within walking distance of the schools.

We enjoyed the church in Fresno and made many good friends in the church and at work. Both Ruth and I were active in church callings. I served as a stake missionary for the years in Fresno. This required three nights a week. Ruth was very supportive of these callings even though it took some time away from the family. It was in Fresno that our fourth child, Bob, entered our home. Ruth still felt we needed a larger family so she inquired of an LDS baby doctor. He soon asked if we would be interested in adopting a baby. I said, “Yes, if it's a boy!” So, Bob was born March 12, 1965. He was a real source of joy to our family. We soon found out boys are different than girls but we have enjoyed all of our children.

I worked as a research agronomist for Spreckels Sugar Company. I drove twenty miles to work at their office. We designed and conducted experiments with sugar beets. These test plots were in grower's fields. We tested new varieties, developed best kinds and rates of fertilizers, tested herbicides and many other things that would increase the yield and quality in the sugar beet. I traveled from Bakersfield south to Manteca north and across the San Joaquin Valley. We developed a technique to manage nitrogen fertilizer in a grower's field that we used to benefit the farmer and the company. It is called the “nitrogen strip technique.” The people at Spreckels were high quality people and we had many friends there.

It was in 1965 that Cathi Cargil came to live with us her last two years in high school. Cathi lived with us a few months in Pendleton when her mother was sick. Since then, her mother had died and her father was killed in a logging accident. Her grandparents called and asked if she could live with us. She stayed with us until we moved to Coalinga in late 1967, then, she elected to stay and finish school in Fresno.

I was offered a teaching job at West Hills College in Coalinga, California. I became acquainted with Ken Savage while putting out research plots on the college farm. This was a tempting offer to teach school. I probably wouldn't have considered it seriously until Spreckels was going to transfer me to Arizona to a new growing area. Somehow, I felt uneasy about moving to Arizona, so we decided to change jobs again. It proved to be the best thing to do as the Spreckels Arizona venture went bust and we would have been stranded. So in the fall of 1967 we moved to Coalinga where I started my teaching career. I was 37 years old and I knew I couldn't change jobs any more if I wanted a decent retirement. It was a prayerful decision which I wondered about over the first few years, but it proved to be great wisdom as Spreckels Sugar Company went through some hard times and my life at West Hills College proved to be much more secure.

## **28 Years in Coalinga**

We moved to Coalinga in September of 1967. I accepted a job teaching agriculture at West Hills Community College. They needed someone who could manage the school farm and teach some classes. The school farm was 150 irrigated acres and 600 acres of range land. It had a 100-cow dairy, 30 beef cows, some sheep and pigs. We grew cotton, sugar beets, alfalfa, corn silage, wheat, barley, oats and some small plots of vegetables and four acres of fruit trees and vines. This diversified operation was intended to give the students a hands-on education and some real farm life experiences.

The teaching staff had largely ignored the farm operation. I didn't realize at the time, but they hired me with the hope I could turn things around and make the farm at least break even financially. Those first few years were a real challenge and I wondered if I had made a mistake bringing my family to this little town of Coalinga. This job required at least six days a week but the college hired a real good man as department head and we worked well together. After a few years we had an Ag Department that was second to none in the San Joaquin Valley.

One of the unique things about the school farm was that inexperienced students ran it. They worked 10 to 14 hours a week under supervision of teachers and me. This was a challenge, but certainly made it a great place to study agriculture. The teachers used real life situations to teach agricultural principles. This also required Saturday as a workday of supervision for me. I once apologized to Ruth for bringing the family to Coalinga under the trying circumstances of that first year. She said, "Please don't apologize for being a good provider. I knew when I married you that I would go wherever it was necessary for you to earn a living and that has not changed." But as the years passed, Coalinga was a good place to raise a family.

I will include a **poem** that **Martin Zubiri** wrote about me working on the farm.

“He slowly looks about, seeing changes he has wrought,  
His face is lined by seasons he has met and fought.  
The eyes slowly narrow to see this golden field,  
By force of work and will, the harvest it will yield.  
This pause is but a moment, he'll move on to other things,  
He knows that time is fleeting, to faith it always clings.  
The labor now is ending; the cycle is now complete,  
He slowly turns around; other problems he must meet.  
Another day has dawned, chasing shadows here and there,

He'll go from full fields, to others lying fallow and bare  
But in his mind's eye he'll see the waving grain,  
Knowing that this cycle will repeat again and again."

We rented a house the first year, as I wanted to see how the job would go before we purchased any house. The house was a small three-bedroom and it was very old. That first winter was a wet one as we received double the annual rainfall. The roof was in sad condition and we had 19 leaks that first rain storm. We had pots and pans everywhere. It was interesting but a bit uncomfortable. After a year we purchased a 10 year-old home near the school farm. It was close enough that I could walk to work and even walked home for lunch with Ruth. It was also close to the schools so the kids walked to school up through high school years. That was one advantage of a small town of 7,000 population. It was also close to the Los Gatos Creek, which was a place for riding motorcycles, digging in the sand, floating down the stream on tubes in the spring and hunting squirrels, etc. One day Bob and his friends were given permission to hunt along the creek with their BB guns. After a while, we heard these young boys calling that they had killed a skunk and they were carrying it home. The parents rushed out to convince them to bury the skunk and then began the treatment to de-odorize them.

We had several pets for the kids. We always had cats around but they were not allowed in the house. Both Ruth and I grew up on a farm where animals were outside and people inside. Judy had real attraction to her cats. One special one was a calico female cat. She had such a nice disposition and had several litters of little calico kittens which were in demand in the neighborhood. One summer day we were just leaving for a vacation when we noticed the calico had been run over by a car. This really upset Judy and all of us, so we held a funeral and gave her a proper burial in the rose garden.

Another pet was Laddie, our dog. He was an Eskimo Spitz and was pure white in color. He was a little pup when we got him and lived to be about 15 years old. While he was the family pet, he and Bob kind of grew up together. One day I brought a little pig home to raise because the sow was so mean she killed her newborn piglets, so Ruth said she would bottle feed the last one. He assumed Ruth to be his provider and Laddie to be his mentor. Two or three times a day the little pig received his milk. He became a friendly little thing and ran with Laddie in the back yard and did everything a dog would do except to bark. When he grew to about 50 pounds I returned him to the school farm.

The following is a tribute that Lorilee gave about her dad on Father's Day in 1997 after she was married. I include it as a little insight into our family life.

### **WHAT IS A DAD?**

He's the guy who got home from work and caught us in his arms and swung us around and hugged us. He's the guy who would point to invisible Indians on the road when we were bored on long trips.

He's the guy who would balance us on his hands so we could pretend that we were in the circus.

He's the guy who would drive to Utah in the middle of the night to avoid the summer heat.

He's the guy who would make us go to places like Bryce Canyon and Yellowstone National Park and camp, even though his daughters weren't too thrilled about it

He's the guy who made his daughters mow the lawn because his only son was too little.

He's the guy who named cows after us at the college farm where he taught, and made us proud when they gave the most milk.

He's the guy who would tell us bedtime stories about the "white buffalo" and "a little boy on a runaway wagon pulling on the reins."

He's the guy who would laugh so hard at movies that he was funnier to watch than the movie itself.

He's the guy who came to his daughter's track meets to watch her run the mile and was amazed every time she did it.

He's the guy who chased cows down main street Coalinga on Christmas Eve when they got out.

He's the guy who was a bishop for 8 years but was always there for his wife and children.

He's the guy who made sure his daughters' date knew that he loved her very much, wanted her home on time, and in the same condition in which she left.

He's the guy who loved and cherished his children's mother and his children knew it.

He's the guy who taught his children to live the gospel by the way he lived his life.

He's the guy who could admit when he was wrong, although he usually wasn't.

He's the guy whose daughter, when tempted not to live the gospel, couldn't go through with it, because she might hurt her dad.

He's the guy whom his daughter wanted to marry, and when she found out she couldn't, she promised herself she would settle for nothing less.

He's the guy who cried at his daughter's temple wedding.

**HE'S MY DAD!**

### **Our Church Activity**

Both Ruth and I had served a mission for the LDS Church and had strong testimonies of the restored gospel and its doctrines and teachings. We are happy that we have living prophets to receive revelations from God to guide us in our days here on earth. Coalinga had a small ward of 180 to 225 people. With this small number, it was necessary for all to hold one or more jobs in the church. The kids grew up in the Primary, Young Women's, boy scouts and other church activities. Our Stake was 70 miles away most of the time, so this required a great deal of travel to meetings and youth dances, etc. Ruth and I served in many different callings through the years. She served as Relief Society President just prior to her death. Even though she had cancer she served her fellow sisters. She is held in great respect among the sisters of Coalinga Ward for her wisdom and dedication. I refer to her history for more detail of her life.

I served as the Bishop of Coalinga Ward for eight years, 1971 through 1978. I was 40 years old when I was called as bishop, so my kids grew up while I was in this position. During this time we needed the second stage (chapel) of our building. This required a large amount of money to be earned and donated by the members in our small ward. At that time, the local members had to come up with 30% of the cost of a building. The faithful worked hard and donated much so we could expand our worship center. This was a great sacrifice for all the saints but we all felt that we were blessed in ways to make it all possible. We took on a tomato harvesting operation for two weeks for Milt Pace. We donated our time and what would have been our salary. Jay Fowkes ran the day crew and I ran the night crew. We were able to earn about \$8,000. Construction was started in the last year of my tenure and it was dedicated in November 1979. Serving as Bishop never interfered with any of my classes and the farm management became easier. Bishops do receive the mantle of the priesthood that gives extra assistance from above to help them earn a living and to take care of bishop's duties.



**COALINGA WARD BISHOPRIC**

**Barry L. Dew, 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor**

**Bishop Laurin K. Beutler**

**E. Jay Fowkes, 1<sup>st</sup> counselor**

## **Rewards of a Teacher**

I never planned to be a teacher while attending college. The opportunity came ten years after working in agricultural research with Oregon State Experiment Station and with Spreckels Sugar Company. I had enjoyed teaching classes in church so I knew I could enjoy teaching in school. It is a big challenge and takes more energy and time than one would expect. The rewards come some years later when some of your former students are in the world of work. I was teaching agriculture in the heart of the richest and most productive valley in the world. Many students became West Side farmers, farm managers, Ag Business salesman and fieldmen, some in Ag Research and some teachers.

I enjoyed the students in the classroom and also working with them on the school farm. I liked watching the student's enthusiasm and skill in a subject grow, and the feeling of giving something positive to students and society. They affectionately referred to me as Mr. "B!"

Ruth did substitute teaching after the kids were in high school. Students who had her admired her and they often spoke to her. She had a lot of love for the youth and was a great teacher. Once when informed that Bob was not learning his time's tables at school she held sessions every day after school until he was very proficient.

## **Summer Vacations**

We usually took a two-week summer vacation as a family. These were nearly always visits to our relatives in Idaho and Utah. We wanted the kids to grow up knowing their cousins. We included stops at the national parks along the way. Some of our visits were to the Grand Canyon, Zion's, Yosemite, Yellowstone and Bryce Canyon National parks. We also floated down the Snake River, took horse rides and camped out.

One vacation, we took Lorilee and her two sons with us to Utah. Sherri was living in Salt Lake City so we took her with us when we went to Rexburg to visit the Hemsley's. On the way back we stopped in Idaho Falls to get some gasoline. Some were taking a rest stop while I filled the car with gas. When I finished, I thought everyone was in the car so I started down the freeway. We had driven about 5 minutes and Lorilee said, "Something is different in the car." Then, we all realized that we had left Sherri at the service station. We had driven away while she was in the restroom. It took us about 15 minutes to get back to the station. As we drove up, there was Sherri standing there with a look of disdain on her face, but we were laughing so hard she couldn't help but laugh with us.

## **The Family and their Accomplishments**

I am proud of my children and their accomplishments. All of the kids were ambitious and worked every summer from junior high age. They all worked some summers on the school farm weeding the cotton and sugar beets. Bob worked with me a couple of summers in irrigation and tractor driving. I felt lucky I could offer them a chance to earn a little spending money and learn the value of money. One spring, I had a 10-acre field of cotton that was real weedy and I needed it cleaned up while the kids were still in school. Lorilee and Sherri agreed to come out after school and work on the weeds. It took them about a week to finish the field. One of the local citizens asked, "Who were those girls you had working in that weedy cotton field?" I said, "They were my daughters." He said, "I have never seen anyone work so steady and I was amazed at how they cleaned that field of those weeds so fast."

While they worked for me on the school farm, they had others jobs too. Lorilee and Sherri worked in the ice cream shop, A & W Root Beer, and the tomato harvest through their college years. Bob and Judy worked in some of these same places as well as at Harris Restaurant. I am proud of their work ethics.

### **Coalinga Earthquake of 1983**

Downtown Coalinga was devastated Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1983 in the afternoon at 4:42 p.m. by a major earthquake, measuring 6.7 on the Richter Scale, that left smoking buildings, crumbled brick and a city in ruins. No fatalities had been reported although at least 28 people were treated for broken bones and minor injuries. The epicenter of the quake, felt throughout the state and also in Nevada, was seven miles northeast of Coalinga. Electricity and gas were out in much of the city. "It looked like a World War II bombing scene," said Assemblyman Jim Costa. Emergency relief and enforcement crews from throughout the valley converged on Coalinga in mass effort to lend natural disaster aid and assistance.

This was a terrible quake which shook for 42 seconds. I was at the school farm swine-farrowing unit when the earth began to shake. After moving outside the building we watched the pole lines swing back and forth and the wires were whipping around. We could see waves moving down the paved road much like you would see on a windy day on a large lake. I went home to check on Ruth as she was just recovering from an operation for breast cancer. As I neared the house she was sitting on the curb some 100 feet from the house. She said, "I was sitting in the kitchen when the quake started. Dishes began to fly across the kitchen and the refrigerator door opened and food also flew out." She was unable to stand because of the motion and so she crawled out the front door.

One in every five houses was so badly damaged that they were replaced with new homes. Our house had about \$5,000 worth of damage to it. There were over 1,000 aftershocks that continued for the next three or four months but none as bad as that first one. Only Bob and Ruth and I were living at home then. The girls were either married or away at school. We were so impressed with the power of "Mother Nature" and hoped never to experience it again.

The Hanford Stake was so helpful in the next coming months. They brought meals to us for over a week and helped people clean up and repair for weeks. It made us realize the goodness of people and the greatness of the Church in our lives.

### **Cancer Returns after 24 Years**

Just a week prior to the earthquake, Ruth was operated on as she had a lump in her remaining breast. It was malignant and was in the lymph system so the breast was removed. The next day Ruth was told the bad news but she already knew based on our reaction. She had such a beautiful attitude about the whole thing. I don't know how she stayed so positive but she did. She said she had a lot of time to count her blessings and review how lucky she had been over the past 24 years. She had chemotherapy treatments four times over the next five years prior to her death. Each time, she lost her hair and became completely bald but it always grew back just as thick. These treatments never were meant to be a cure, but just slowed the cancer growth. Ruth always had such a positive attitude and looked to a better day. It was in the spring of 1988 that the cancer had spread to her bones and made it really difficult for her to walk. Even at this stage she continued to serve as Relief Society president. The last two weeks of her life were spent in the hospital in Fresno. Cathi and Lorilee were able to come to be with her those last days. I refer you to Ruth's history for more details of these times.

On one of my visits with her in the hospital she took my hand and said, "Oh Laurin, haven't we been lucky?" My thoughts were, "Ya, real lucky, you dying of cancer." She said, "I mean we have had a good life, good jobs and so much fun with a great family." As we read her patriarchal blessing, Ruth said, "Now I know what a statement means in my blessing. It says, 'Time shall never erase from your face the beauties of youth.' That will be true because I'll never live long enough to get old." Ruth died May 27, 1988 at the age of 60 lacking a month.



I will list some prophetic statements in her Patriarchal Blessing that came true.

1. You will be a mother in Israel and other babies are to be blessed by you.
2. The father of your children shall become a judge in the midst of Zion.
3. The spirit of leadership shall rest mightily upon you and you shall be respected and loved by all whose privilege it shall be to know you.
4. Even the angel of death shall have respect for the desires of your heart through the power of the Priesthood.
5. You shall labor in the missions of the church and the power of expression shall be given you.

## **TO MY DESCENDANTS**

I am nearly 70 years old as I write this section of my life's story. In those 70 years I have received many wonderful blessings. It is easy to become philosophic when looking back over the years. So forgive me if I reminisce and testify of what I believe.

It seems that Ruth and I were meant to marry and raise a family. It seemed that we were meant to live in Coalinga where I served as a bishop. But most of all, it seemed that it was important to have our children. I believe that to raise a righteous generation of people may be one of the most important reasons for my life to have been preserved.

Although life has not always been easy, it has been kind. I feel this earth life has a divine purpose for each of us. I believe we are sent here to gain experience as mortals and this will lend itself for growth, development and understanding throughout time. I believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. I believe that Jesus Christ is my Savior and he overcame the power of death for all mankind and made it possible for the forgiveness of my mistakes. I believe life goes on eternally and this life is only one stage of our eternal existence. I believe God speaks to mankind through prophets. I believe Joseph Smith was a great and important latter-day prophet. I believe in the power of the Priesthood of God. I believe that power is on the earth today in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I feel my life was preserved by divine intervention three times so I could live and marry and raise a family. I have not become anyone of great importance. I have obtained a college education and contributed a few things in the field of agriculture. I have been a teacher and tried to train young people for careers, but somehow I don't feel those were the main reasons for my life being extended.

I believe that we should be supportive and loving companions to our spouses. That we should become knowledgeable about parenthood, human development and raising children to be good citizens. I believe some of the greatest good you may be able to do is to raise up a righteous generation. Few people become of great importance to society but you can be very important within the walls of your own homes.

Let love be your guiding force. Be slow to wrath, slow to find fault, slow to blame others. Be swift to forgive, to listen, to be understanding, to vocalize your love. Let your spouse and children hear of your love for them. Love them first and love will be returned.

This little poem says a lot to me about life:

"To reach the unreachable star,  
To be better by far than you are  
This is your quest,  
For your life to invest."