

MY STORY
by
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As I look forward to the 50 year celebration of ISI, I am filled with memories of God's providential leading in my life over these years. The following is my testimony of how God prepared me for ISI and how God prepared ISI for me.

From the eighth grade my dream through high school was to be an engineer. When I turned 17 during WW II, I skipped my last semester in high school and in January, 1943, entered Iowa State College. My goal was to complete a year of college before being drafted. I came home for the summer to work.

In September, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart through the testimony of a Navy flight instructor. I thought I was a Christian and yet I had an emptiness in my heart. The next night I knelt by my bed and prayed simply, "Lord Jesus, take over my life." Peace filled my heart and my whole life was changed. The next day I had a great hunger to read the Bible which became God's personal voice to me.

When I returned to Iowa State, God led me to the IVCF chapter where I discovered fellow believers who understood what had happened to me. My goals for life were changing and for the next two years I majored in IVCF and church and minored in engineering. I knew God was calling me to Christian ministry, but what, how and where? IVCF had placed a great emphasis on foreign missions and I attended the first Urbana conference.

I spent the summer of 1945 in Chicago as a intern in the field engineering department of General Electric. I began to attend Youth for Christ on Saturday nights. It was there I first heard Bob Finley give his testimony as the boxing champion from the University of Virginia. By the end of the summer I knew I did not want to spend my life as an engineer, but I was not ready to switch from the physical sciences to a language and literature major to prepare for the pastorate. I soon discovered someone else had already planned my next move.

Japan surrendered that summer which ended WW II. When I turned 18, my eyesight kept me from being drafted. To my great surprise I got a letter in late August stating that Uncle Sam wanted me in the army. I thought it would be a two year term. I was inducted in October and suddenly discharged in November 1946. What should be my next step?

Perhaps this was the time to make a change. The pastor I admired when in elementary school became my mental model. I wanted to be like him. He was a graduate of the Moody Bible Institute. I wrote the school for an application. They wrote back that because of the large number of war veterans, it would be two years before I could be admitted. I then reapplied to Iowa State and was admitted in January 1947 and graduated in July 1948. God had other plans for me.

It was during this time that Bob Finley became the IVCF staff assigned to Iowa State. I don't remember the details, but somehow I made contact with him in Chicago and rode back with him to Iowa State in a Pontiac he had purchased from Billy Graham.

I will never forget the week he spent with us. Normally the staff member would spend the time trying to help with personal problems, chapter plans, and ways to encourage us. Bob was different. Each night he scheduled a lecture at the Union. Students would show up who were strangers to our group. Where did they come from? During the day Bob would meet them on campus and invite them to the meeting. Because of the crowd, the last lecture was held in a church near the campus. Wow!!!

In the spring of 1948, our IVCF chapter had a weekend retreat at a camp near the campus. Among those who came was a Chinese gentleman that we would today call a visiting scholar. I do not know who invited him, but I soon became his friend. He was one of ten agricultural engineers brought to Iowa State by the International Harvester Company.

I met the other nine and ate my meals with them in the Union cafeteria. That summer I arranged a picnic for them and IVCF in the back yard of a Christian family, several attended a Bible study I began on Sunday

afternoon, and in July, they provided an excellent Chinese meal for IVCF. The CIM Mission secretary came out from Chicago to be our guest speaker for the evening. I left Iowa State with a firm belief that I had found God's calling for my life, but with no idea how it would be accomplished.

I returned home in Chicago and in September enrolled at the Moody Bible Institute. My plan was to attend for a year of intense Bible study. Instead, I stayed three years in the Pastor course. Classes ran from September to August each year. Besides the required practical work assignments, I....

1. Was leader of the China Prayer Band for a year
2. Often attended the CIM meeting on Saturday night where I met returned missionaries and kept abreast of news from China.
3. Taught English to immigrants at the Chinese church in China Town on Sunday afternoon.
4. From time to time visited the International House at the University of Chicago to meet international students.
5. Became friends with the internationals attending MBI.

During my last term in the summer of 1951 I became concerned about what to do after MBI. I made a phone call to Stacey Woods at IVCF to inquire about the possibility of ministering to internationals with them. Before I could even share my thoughts, he abruptly said that all the staff positions were filled and hung up. I didn't know where to turn.

Sometime in June to my great surprise, Bob Finley appeared as the speaker at the MBI men's evening devotions. Immediately after the service, I rushed up and said "Bob, I need to see you." He told me to come to his guest room at five the next morning. I was there!

I had one question: "What do you think is the most important mission field today and how could I be part of it." His first response was to go to France as a foreign student. With my background I did not feel qualified and rejected the idea. Then he said, "I think the most important mission field is the foreign students coming to the United States. Would you be interested?" My reply, "Would I? That is all I want to do!"

He told me that he was on his way to see Billy Graham about starting a ministry to internationals and he would let me know what happened. I graduated in August, 1951. I waited daily for a letter from Bob. None came. In September I filled out an application for another ministry. But my heart wasn't in it.

In late September the letter came. Bob had moved to Berkeley, CA, and was launching a ministry for internationals called FOCUS. It stood for Fellowship of Overseas College and University Students. The idea was to have a friendship organization for all internationals that would be run by Christians to bring the students and American Christians together. This new approach to missions brought criticism from some that Bob was raising money from churches for a Christian organization when it was only a secular social club. Today, ministry through friendship is standard practice.

He wrote that if I were still interested to come to Berkeley. He said he could not promise financial support but we could trust God to supply our needs. I immediately made plans to go. But I had a problem. How would I get from Chicago to Berkeley without money for transportation?

Plan A: Drive a car to California for a dealer or a person who wanted a car there, but did not want to drive. I searched the Chicago papers daily without any result.

Plan B: My father worked for the Burlington railroad and could get me a pass to Denver on short notice. God would have to provide a way from Denver to Berkeley. I phoned Bob with this plan. He told me when I got to Denver to contact a returned missionary, Mrs. Dye, who was working with international students there. I left Chicago on a Friday night and arrived in Denver Saturday morning.

The first thing I did was buy a Denver paper and look for a car to drive the rest of the way....and I found one! But I also wanted to spend time with Mrs. Dye before leaving.

I phoned the dealer. The car was available. I asked if I could leave on Sunday afternoon after church instead of

Saturday. I explained my reason. He told me the car was a late model expensive car, but if I promised to leave Sunday afternoon, I could pick it up that morning. The car was a 1950 4-door Cadillac. The next morning I took Mrs. Dye and a Chinese student to church in my new car and that afternoon I drove to California in style with all expenses paid. Not bad for a poor missionary!

But I had another problem. The car was to go to Los Angeles and not Berkeley. When I phoned Bob with this news he informed me that he would be on an extended trip, but would make arrangement with the Navigators for me to stay in Pasadena until he returned.

When I arrived in Los Angeles, Billy Graham was in the Hollywood Bowl and Dawson Trautman was in charge of the counselors. For the rest of the crusade I spent my days stuffing packets for the counselors and the nights at the crusade. I also had the privilege to attend Henrietta Mears' College class at Hollywood Presbyterian church and to meet a group of single adults in the church who were beginning an outreach to internationals. Through activities with them I began meeting international students at the University of Southern California. When Bob returned to Berkeley I asked if it would be all right for me to stay in Los Angeles. He said that was fine. I spent the next year living near USC.

I was completely self-trained. My only manual apart from the Bible was Dale Carnegie's book, "How to win Friends and Influence People."

Beside Henrietta Mears' class, I found much encouragement attending the inspirational and planning meetings on Saturday mornings in the home of Vonette and Bill Bright. Campus Crusade was only at UCLA. I also became a friend of Dan Fuller through a prayer group at USC where he was a Ph.D. student.

In the summer of 1952, Bob asked me to move to Berkeley. Dr. Barnhouse had persuaded him to expand FOCUS to the east coast. I believe it was that fall that Bob moved to Washington D.C. During this time of transition, Max Kershaw joined the staff in Berkeley. In 1953 he left to begin the ministry in Chicago.

Through developing relationships with students with other religions, I began questioning my ability to defend the Christian faith and to sort out my own Christian values. My Midwest fundamentalism was being challenged by the freedom I found in California Christians. I also wanted to prove the Bible to be the Word of God and I could not. I began to think about going to a seminary to work through the questions I had in theology and personal lifestyle.

But I did not want to leave ISI with no one in Berkeley as most of our ministry was meeting boats and airplanes with students from Asia, show them San Francisco, often keep them overnight, and assist them to arrange transportation to their schools. Bob was building a list of Christians across the country who would be willing to host students coming to their city. Our job was to link those we could match. Students would also write back to friends planning to study in the US to contact us before they arrived in San Francisco. This built a lot of goodwill for ISI among students.

In the spring of 1954 Bob visited Berkeley to inform me that his brother, Allen, would be coming to Berkeley and he wanted me to go to New York to start a ministry there. Since no one was in New York, I felt this was a good time to leave ISI to go to seminary.

On July first I was without a job, no money saved, and no school. I prayed for three things: a seminary, a job to support me, and a church in which to minister. In late August, God spoke to me through the Phillips translation of II Timothy 2:4 "No man in active service entangles himself in civilian pursuits." I had quit ISI to go to seminary and here I was trying to eak out a living in temporary jobs.. The next morning I quit the my current job. Five minutes after I returned home, Al Finley phoned to see if I could help meet the President Wilson that would dock with 100 students on board. I was available!

I filled my car with four students who were going to schools in southern states. They begged me to take them to Yosemite and agreed to pay my expenses to Los Angeles via Yosemite (where they would leave by train) and back to Berkeley.

While in LA I drove to Pasadena to see Dan Fuller who by then was teaching at Fuller Seminary. As he described the seminary to me, I knew this was where God wanted me. I returned to Berkeley Labor Day weekend. The next Wednesday I sent my application airmail special delivery with all the required recommendations etc.. Thursday I drove overnight to Fuller Seminary. I arrived at the office of the chairman of the admission committee to hear him say on the phone, "If he comes back will you give him this message..." I said, "Here I am." I was accepted. That afternoon I attended a freshman retreat until Sunday afternoon. By Monday morning, all three of my prayers were answered. God is sooo good! [I learned a big lesson. I can't imagine where I would be had I not quit my job that morning!]

After Fuller, my marriage to DonnaMae (another story), pastoring two small churches, and attempting to be a self-supporting missionary, I reapplied to ISI in the summer of 1973. We were asked to go to Purdue University where we stayed until May of 1997. During the Christmas break of 1996, I was in an Atlanta motel with a van filled with students going to Florida when I received a phone call to come home. DonnaMae had passed out in the kitchen, banged her head on a doorpost and the floor and was in the hospital. We moved to Noblesville to be near our children in case another emergency might occur when I am gone and to begin ISI at IUPUI [Indiana University, Purdue University in Indianapolis].

I am constantly reminded of God's words found in Isaiah 55:8,9 . "For my thoughts are not your thoughts;, neither are my ways your ways.....As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." I could never have planned the timing and purpose for the major events that have shaped my life up to now. Looking back I can only say, "God has been so very good to me!"