

# *Heeding The Call*

*a Missionary Memoir*

Grace L. Ingulsrud

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## Heeding the Call

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## *Foreword*

**T**his memoir is dedicated to the memory of my husband, Lars. I am sorry that he has not been able to help write it—he would have had a lot of interesting stories to contribute. I am also sad that he was not able to read this account of his life and of those dear to him. But he has had such a profound influence on many lives and my prayer is for that influence to continue as others read this story.

I also dedicate this memoir to our five children and five grandchildren. In the gospel of Matthew 13:52, Jesus describes one who has been trained for the kingdom as one “who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” I pray as they (our children) read our stories and the events that have shaped their heritage, that they will take these “old treasures” and benefit from them even as they experience the “new treasures” in their lives. Perhaps that is what Lars was envisioning when he often stated that he expected his children to become better Christians than he had been.

Since I wrote this book mainly for our children, some of the details of our family life may be boring to others, but hopefully the account of ordinary people experiencing God’s leading in their lives will also be a blessing to some.

I express my deepest thanks and appreciation to our children who have encouraged me in the writing of this memoir. They have given helpful advice as they have critiqued parts of what I have written. Special thanks to Faith who helped in the selection of the pictures. I am especially grateful to Joel who has helped me in learning how to compose this on my Macintosh, and has himself put in many hours of work formatting and designing the book in preparation for printing.

Grace L. Ingulsrud  
Forest Lake, Minnesota  
September 1999



## Introduction

*Who is going to take care of those little children?*

Lars and Selma Ingulsrud had come to Japan as missionaries in 1952. After their first six-year term of mission work, they had spent ten months in the United States on furlough, visiting families and speaking in churches about the work in Japan. Since the Evangelical Lutheran Church had sent out many missionaries in those years after 1949 when Olaf Hansen had been sent to start this new area of work, the “Japan Mission Family” had grown to forty-eight people by 1952, and to seventy-five by 1959. I had also joined the mission in 1954. As a “family,” this group shared the excitement of new mission work in Japan, and grew close together as they also shared their problems, joys and sorrows. So when Selma Ingulsrud became ill shortly after her return from furlough in March of 1959, the whole mission family was very concerned. We were all praying for her recovery when we had been informed that her condition was very serious. The doctors had diagnosed her illness as encephalitis and when the news came that she had lost the battle, we were all devastated. Our sorrow at losing a friend and colleague couldn’t compare to the loss of a loving wife and companion for Lars, and the loss of a devoted mother for Ruth, John E., and Faith, at the tender ages of eight, six and four.

We all wanted to ask the question, “Why?” and when there was no answer, our concern was for the family who would now have to make a life for themselves without the loving care of their mother. It was this concern that occupied my thoughts one night as I prayed for Lars and his children.

*“Who is going to take care of those little children?”* I don’t know if it was just a question, but it was in the form of a prayer. I may have voiced it—I can’t remember for sure. But in the silence of the moment, a very mysterious thing happened.

I heard an answer: *“You.”*

I was stunned—and confused. Had I really heard a voice? If it wasn’t a voice, it was a realization so strong that I audibly answered, *“No, I can’t.”*

Then only silence followed—not only that night, but for a whole year. Until that night, I had been looking forward to continuing my work as a single lady missionary in Japan. In spite of some difficulties in adjusting to life in Japan, away from my own family, and the difficulties of learning the language, I had come to love my work and I wanted to continue. I had also come to the point where I wasn’t concerned about spending the rest of my life as a single person—I was quite happy and liked my independence. Now did this “message” mean that my life was going to change? Was this really a message from the Lord, or was my imagination running wild? How was I to know?

In May of 1959, *The Missionary*, a monthly magazine published by the Board of Foreign Missions came out with an article that Selma had written while they were on furlough.

## *Introduction*

She wrote about Japanese students in her English Bible classes, and compared her concern for these students to a mother's concern for her children.

As mothers, there are times when we must entrust our children to someone else—for an evening, a day, a week, or longer...

This magazine article was published very close to the time of her death. Her missionary friends in Japan were amazed at the prophetic tone of the article. She had no idea when she wrote those words that her children would soon be entrusted to someone else for that "longer" period.

A favorite scripture of mine is Proverbs 3:5-6.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

We have been confident through the years that the Lord has been guiding us, and in many different ways. Often we have not understood His guidance at the time, but in hindsight have recognized that our lives have been in His hands. Things have happened that we had not planned. After Selma's death, a Japanese friend who felt very distraught over this great loss commented to Lars that she thought God must have made a mistake. He was quick to rebuke her and confirmed his own conviction that was not the case—God never makes a mistake.

This book of our Memoirs will attempt to tell our story, a story of God's guidance in our lives. It is a story of three people's lives—three individuals—Lars, Selma, and Grace—whose lives started out separately, but became intertwined as we heeded God's call.

# Part I

*Lars Milo*



## 1. Norwegian Roots

The story of Lars Milo's family begins in Norway. His father who was also named Lars Ingulsrud—with no middle name—was born near Notodden in Telemark, Norway on November 19, 1877. The family lived on a farm that had been purchased by Lars' great-great-grandfather, Anders Olson in 1763. Twenty-five years later, the farm was divided into two—North Ingulsrud and South Ingulsrud. Anders' son, Ole Anderson became the owner of South Ingulsrud until his son, Lars Olson took it over in 1833. His son Ole Larson was born in 1835 and married Margit Haslekaas Olesdatter in 1863. They had five sons, but the oldest died of pneumonia at the age of eighteen. They decided that the farm was not big enough for two families so Ole Larson sold South Ingulsrud in 1885 to a cousin, Olav Ingolfsrud.

Hoping for a better life, the family immigrated to the United States on March 17, 1885. They also changed their name to Ingulsrud, leaving behind the custom of the son taking the father's first



*Lars Ingulsrud Family: Little Ole, Ben, Lars (father of Lars Milo), Anna, Big Ole*



*Grandfather and Grandmother Froyland; Gina and Johnny sitting in chairs*

name and adding "son." The second oldest of the remaining four sons was Lars who was eight years old at the time they immigrated.

A daughter, Anna was born to this family in 1888 after they had settled in North Dakota. About one year later, the parents, Ole and Margit both died within two months of each other. One report states that they died of typhoid, contracted from drinking contaminated water. Another source reported that a diphtheria or flu epidemic swept the country and they became ill after caring for neighbors who were ill. They left behind the five children, ages from one year to eighteen. A neighbor, Martin Hanson rented the farm and he and his wife took the responsibility of raising the children even though they had children of their own. The Hansons gave these children a loving home until they were able to take care of themselves. When Lars



*Lars Ingulsrud Homestead Sod shack built in 1899*

turned twenty-one, he was able to file for a homestead, so in 1899 he homesteaded in Prospect Township near Edmore. He started out with a sod-house and a small barn, and used oxen the first few years. For the next eighteen years, he worked at various jobs, homesteading in Canada, and traveling back and forth between his two homesteads. In 1914, he made a trip back to Norway, visiting his old home and relatives for about six months.

Gina Froyland came from Norway in 1915 to visit her uncle who had also immigrated. Her trip was a high-school graduation gift from her aunt in Norway. Hers was a one-way ticket, but her aunt instructed her to let her know when she wanted to come back and she would send her the return ticket. She was only sixteen years old when she came to North Dakota. She had been born on January 28, 1899 on the farm known as Lien, near Lierbyen, not far from Drammen. Her parents were Tobias and Bertha Froyland.

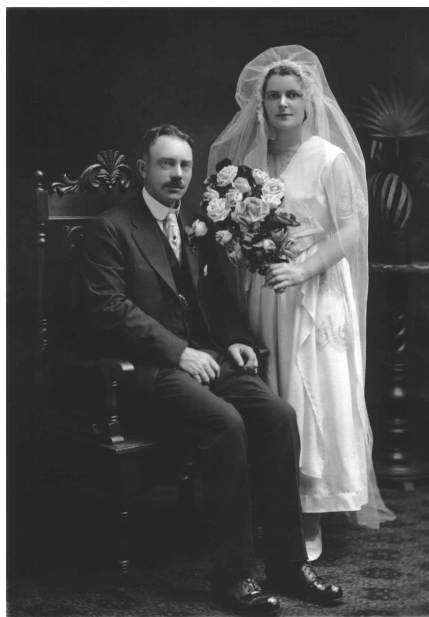
After coming to North Dakota, she went to school to learn English and worked for a time. Gina never wrote to her aunt for that return ticket to Norway, because she had met Lars Ingulsrud and they were married on November 14, 1917. He was forty years old, and she was not quite eighteen.

They built a new house on the homestead near Edmore, North Dakota, and raised nine children there. Though Gina loved her family dearly, she was often frustrated and felt tied down with all the work in caring for the family. However, she found some release for her creative inclinations by writing poetry and some plays.

The great respect his children had for their father was always evident. The fact that he had been an older father than most others seemed to add to the respect that they had for him because of the wisdom and experiences that he had gained over the years. He was known by other young people in the district as being very strict, but his own children didn't share that impression. They always knew that they were loved. It was said that he set the boundaries wide—within which he left room for them to make their own decisions—but he set them high, holding them to high standards.

"You're a Christian—now act like it," was often all that he would say. For one who had not had very much formal education, he became very influential in his community, serving on the Farmers' Union for many years. He lived an interesting life—going from settling a new land in a sod house with primitive tools and oxen—to using tractors and combines, to the age of airplanes and television.

After his death in 1956, Franklin, the youngest son was still at home doing the farming so Gina



*Lars and Gina Ingulsrud*



stayed on the farm until 1959. A bachelor whom they had known for many years offered to sell his house in Edmore for two thousand dollars. Gina bought it and moved in to town. One of her aunts in Norway had written and encouraged her to come back to Norway for a visit, but she insisted that she disliked travel and decided not to go. Perhaps she would have felt more inclined to go if her parents had still been living, but they had both passed away in 1955. Her brother, Gunnar, coaxed again a few years later but again her dislike for travel kept her at her cozy home in Edmore. There she enjoyed her garden, visiting with her neighbors—who were also widows living alone. She lived close enough to the church so she was able to walk there every Sunday, and for other special events.



## 2. *A Prairie Childhood*

Lars Milo was born on November 21, 1922. To distinguish between him and his father, he was called by his second name, Milo, by his family and friends. It was while he was in the army when he always had to write his first name, middle initial, last name that he came to be called Lars. He was the third child of nine born to his parents. Bertha had been born in 1918 and Odin in 1920. Two years after Lars Milo was born, George arrived, and just a little more than a year later, the twins Anna and Arnold joined the family. Then in 1927, Ole Glenn was born. Two years later Maida, the third sister arrived and Franklin completed the family of nine in 1932. The three bedroom house that his father had built was well filled—with the six boys in one room, the three girls in another, and the parents in the third. In those days, most everyone had big families and it wasn't considered unusual. As the children grew up, they all learned to help with the work on the farm; the boys worked in the fields and did the chores, and the girls helped their mother in the house.



*Lars Milo at six months*

One of the memories that Lars had of his early childhood showed that with so many children fairly close together, each child didn't always get as much individual attention as he or she might have wished. He remembered sitting on the door-step crying because Bertha and Odin were telling him to get his shoes tied, but no one had taught him how to do it. At the age of four, that was perhaps the beginning of his independent spirit.

In the early 1980's, Lars started writing down some of his early memories of his life on the farm:

My earliest memory is when Pa was building the hip-roof barn in 1926. I was impressed by the cupola, the big silvery thing they put on top of the barn to let ventilation into the hay-loft. The barn was built onto the lean-to that Pa had been using for a barn.

Pa had built the farmstead on one of the highest hills in Prospect Township, just up from the south west corner of the homestead. There were neighbors one-half mile west, a mile south, and a mile east—close enough for the boys from the families to become good friends. I remember being chased by a bull one day, and a neighbor boy came running with a 2x4 and knocked the bull over. My best friend was Robert Stotts. They lived a mile east of us. I think we were the same age but he was big like my brothers. Another good friend was George Ivesdal—his father was Ma's uncle. George was one year younger than I, but we were good friends and always got along well with each other. One day at Prospect



*Ingulsrud Homestead—Edmore, North Dakota*

School, we were playing tag in the loft of the school barn. I was “it” and George came running right at me, dodged and got around me and slammed into the door on the end of the loft. The door latch was not latched properly and George went flying out the door landing hard and breaking his collar bone. It was the first “accident” I had witnessed. After the war, George and I were room-mates when we went to Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

In my younger years, I remember best the harvests. Pa was the engineer on the Berntson steam rig. Pa promised me that I could be “straw-monkey” when I got to be ten years old, but the drought came and I think it was in 1931 that there wasn’t enough crop to run the big steam rigs. John Ivesdal had a smaller outfit and could thresh all the farms in the area. Odin and I hauled bundles every fall from when I became 13. Sometimes I was so tired at night that I’d fall asleep eating supper. We had two hay racks, one with ordinary big wooden wheels and a lower one with steel wheels. I drove the lower one so I could haul as big a load as the other men. Odin and I worked all fall on the threshing rig and our wages paid for the threshing at our farm.

We rented one quarter—160 acres— from the Driscolls—an old couple who lived in Iowa. They owned four separate quarters in the area. She had been an official in the Indian Bureau. They sometimes stayed at our place through harvest. He was quite a story-teller and claimed to have known the James brothers—the outlaws.

When I was ten years old, Pa got very sick one winter. He went to see Dr. Cox in Edmore who suspected TB. He told Pa to go and have it checked out at the TB State hospital at Dunseith —San Haven. We had a

'24 model T Ford and Pa had me ride with him to Dunseith. It took us almost all day to drive the 100 miles and was the longest trip I had ever gone on, and my first sight of mountains—the so-called Turtle Mountains. We had to stay over to get the results of the tests so stayed in a hotel in Dunseith. It was my first experience in a hotel, and I was fascinated by the big water pitcher and bowl, and the rope in a bag for a fire-escape. The Salvation Army was playing music in the hall and as it was free, we went to it. The next day we went back up to San Haven and got the results. Pa had TB, quite bad, and they tested me and found that I, also was positive. The doctor said that the whole family would have to be tested. Bertha, Odin, George, Arnold and Ole all tested positive so we all had to go to the San Haven Sanitarium. We had to ask Johnny Froyland, Ma's brother, to take over the farm. He was a migrant worker at that time. Ma, Anna, Maida and Frank were left at home.

At San Haven, the adults were separated from the children in different buildings and we got to visit Pa for an hour once a month. Ole was very young and had a hard time of it—he was in a separate ward from where we were. We had to take rest hour both morning and afternoon. A lot of the kids did a lot of running around when they were supposed to be resting. I wanted to go home so I did my best to do what the nurses said. My worst problem was eating tomatoes. We got tomatoes in some form or other every day, and I complained to Pa. He told us that they must be good for us or they wouldn't have them so much. After that I ate my tomatoes and maybe it was the key to my release in one year while my brothers had to stay two.

Pa and I were released after one year and went home. I would help with the haying and the chores. Uncle Johnny was really good with horses. It was that year that Sven Veen worked for us in haying and harvest. He was a good worker but he spoke Norsk-English. We were hauling hay from the Driscoll quarter one day, and using the slings to put it



*Threshing crew (Lars Ingulsrud driving tractor)*

into the hay-loft. We had one load left that had been bunched in a slough. A thundercloud was coming up in the west and I didn't think we should go out again until we saw it was safe. Sven said, "Vel, ve got to take a chance. Columbus took a chance ven he discovered Nor'Dakota." So we went and got about half a load on when it rained hard, and we and the load were soaked.

This reminds me of our barn again. My five brothers and I spent a lot of time in the barn, swinging on the slings and climbing out on the rail. I remember one day when Jerry and Bud McKay were at our place. Bud was my age and Jerry was the same age as Odin. There was only a few tons of hay in the loft and it was all in the back third or so of the loft. Odin went hand over hand all the way to the middle of the loft where there was no hay, and climbed into the cupola. He rested and then came back. I knew I couldn't do it, but Jerry had to try. He got about half way and played out. He hung there with his arms and legs around the rail. I was really scared, and he started to cry. I wanted to push hay under him and have him drop, but Odin said there wasn't time and he might get hurt. So he climbed up to the rail again and out to where Jerry was hanging. He had a hard time to get Jerry to let go, but he carried him back, hand over hand, and Jerry was heavier than Odin. That is only one of the many memories connected with that barn.

I was home on furlough in 1982 and in Edmore when Frank disposed of that barn. He saved some of the lumber and used it to build his garage, but the rest he buried. I'm glad he buried it—that's much better than having it stand there unusable and dead.

Judging by the closeness of the family in later years, that closeness must have had its beginning in that farm home near Edmore, North Dakota. Each child was different in personality and interests, but they had love and respect for one another, and enjoyed the interaction that a large family ensures. Some of his siblings have reminisced about this time in their lives. His sister, Maida, wrote in a letter for his birthday in 1993:

What a lot of years have passed since you used to let me ride piggy-back from the mail box home when we were let off there after school. I so appreciated having you for my big brother.

How excited the rest of us would be when either you or Odin were expected home—you both were so good at sharing the details of your days—the people you met if you hitch-hiked home and telling about people and things you'd done while gone. You also were great at telling us the story of any good movie you'd seen.

I especially remember the three-speed bike you left for us when you went into the army. It was so great to finally have a bike to use. How I loved that!

You've been such a great older brother and I hope you know how much you've always meant to me.

Lars' brother Ole, (Glenn) was five years younger and some of his earliest memories of his big brother were when they were at the TB sanitarium. He says:

Milo was always different from the rest of us kids. I didn't notice it then but as I look back, I think Ma and Pa noticed it. When our mother

came to see us, we would run off and play but Milo would stand there and talk to our mother and dad. As I look back, I think the Lord had his hand on him from the beginning.

After we got back from San Haven, though I was quite a bit younger, we worked together a little. I remember especially one time when he took me along to work on the Driscoll land—in a little wagon and a team of horses. I don't know why I remember that but I must have felt honored that he took me with him.

When he and Odin were going to High School in Edmore, the picture I have in my mind is of them walking home from school on Friday nights—ten miles. In winter time, I wondered why they didn't freeze to death. I always thought that everything they did was exceptional anyway.

When the war started and he went into the army, there was another experience that I remember especially. He came through St. Paul (January, 1946) when I was in the hospital and donated a pint of blood for my lung operation. I was very thankful for that.

Later when he was going to college in Kansas, he came home for Christmas. I was on the farm the day he was to go back on his motorcycle. I had helped him put it together a year earlier. It was -20 degrees when he was going to leave, and we had to use the horses and a chain to pull the motorcycle to get it started. I was surprised that he made it all the way back to Kansas.

The best memories of really being with Milo—one on one—was the winter of 1950 and 1951 when he was in Seminary and I stayed with him and Selma and Ruthie while I worked in St. Paul. What we enjoyed most was when Milo and I went skiing down on a river bank in South St. Paul. We had a great time! Also all the sessions I had with him talking about theology—I would go with him once in awhile to a class—just walk in and listen—that was great!

But then he went to Japan and I went to California, and that changed everything. We can't go back to the great days on the farm, and even though we didn't have much of anything, we all had each other and they were great days. I can honestly say that my two big brothers were my heroes, and they still are. It's not hard to put down events in our lives, but it's hard to communicate the feelings that go with them. A lot of things in life have changed, but this hasn't... as I was growing up, Odin and Milo were my heroes and I thought they were the greatest. Odin's been gone a long time, but Milo has been there and nothing has happened to change what I think of him. We not only need to focus on what we have in Christ, but also on what we have in life—relationships... and it's nice to realize that no matter what happens, we have a past of great relationships.

Another brother, George, who was two years younger than Lars Milo, remembers some of the fun times they had on the farm:



*Lars Milo as a teenager*

Dad built skis for us boys and it seemed like Odin and Milo became proficient at riding on them. Milo especially. They were made from 8 feet by 1x4 fir boards, and Dad would shape them with a plane and draw knife quite readily. It was my job to ride the horse—pulling Odin and Milo on the skis. We would normally go a mile east to Stott's or Robert would come over and we would tie these ropes to the hame and go for three miles to see Morris Goodwill.

One time when we were children, Milo and Dad went to Edmore to hear some politicians. When they came home, Milo made a speech to us younger siblings, repeating so often: "As you go by the Alamo to the poles in November...how can you vote for anything but Constitutional Government?" The guy must have been a Republican as they tried to make Roosevelt out as a Constitution buster.

Doing chores on the farm was, of course, essential, but neither Milo nor I enjoyed them. Arnold didn't seem to mind. Odin was finally away at the University and Milo became the oldest. It fell on his shoulders to do the fall plowing. Dad had a rule—if you worked the horses, you took care of them—fed them, harnessed them, the works. There were seven horses. Milo didn't have to help milk or anything but for two or three weeks that fall he hardly uttered a word—he really hated taking care of horses.

Both Dad and Milo were born too early. They would have gloried with a computer at their disposal. I think Dad saw himself in Milo. How else would he go for the \$400 Radio Course when Milo graduated from High School in the midst of the depression.

Arnold, who was three years younger than Lars also reminisced about their childhood:

I guess one of my first remembrances of my brother Milo is in knee pants, a short brother and kind of a tuffy. I don't remember very much before we went to San Haven, but since he returned home before we did, I remember him coming along to visit, and when we finally returned home, he and Ann showed us around. As we got older and helped with the farm work, we did many things together—cutting the grain with a binder and shocking, mowing hay and hauling it to the loft in the barn. Then Milo started working out at neighbors, and one year when he worked for Berntsons, he got to drive a 15-30 tractor which we thought was something great. When Odin and Milo hauled bundles for the threshers, Milo was so proud to be able to work out part of the threshing bill for the folks. At that time, they didn't pay the kids—they would pay the parents.

When he played baseball, he played second base and to him it was the most important position on the field. I remember him telling about some of the games and how a short, stocky guy could cover the plate the best. Babe Ruth was sort of stocky, so I guess Milo was my Babe Ruth at the time.

We were also impressed when he got to be a cat-skinner, driving a D-6 Caterpillar when he was in the CCCs—making ditches and dikes along the Mouse River by Kramer, ND. Most of the money he earned was sent to the folks—I think they got \$22 per month, and Milo got \$8—I'm not sure about the amount. But we heard that he would buy candy bars on



week-ends and sell them to the other CCC guys during the week—at a profit.

One of my best recollections of Milo was that after he had seen a good movie, he would tell the story to us at night before we went to sleep. I thought that his telling it was just as good or better than seeing the movie myself. Maida remembers as a little girl, taking her pillow and laying by the door of the boys' room so she could listen to Milo tell the story.

He bought a Durant car while he was in the CCCs for \$35. Pa bought it from him and that was our car for many years—the first after the Model T.

When Milo was in High School, he was learning an essay for Speech class—one by Harry Emerson Fostick. I can still remember him practising his essay as we were cleaning calf pens in the barn. I heard him say it over and over so that I almost memorized it, too. If I remember right, he did real well with it, and someone told us that the professor had said that in 35 years of teaching, he considered Milo as his best student.

On the negative side, I remember Milo as getting a little moody or grumpy when he had put in a hard day or accomplished a lot. It was like he wanted us to notice what he had done. Maybe it was hard for him to follow after Odin, who was so talented. I didn't notice this trait in later years.

Frank was Lars' youngest sibling, and the difference of ten years naturally made their relationship different. But he, too, remembered his story-telling.

As I think back on my relationship with brother Milo, I think mostly of his kindness. Even when he teased me, it was with a light-heartedness that made me glad for his attention.

I remember times when he had seen a good movie and would tell us all about it. He would describe scenes and characters so vividly that sometimes later when I would see that movie, it was not as good as seeing it through his eyes. I guess that is the gift of a born story teller.



*Ingulsrud siblings while Milo (far right) was in the CCC, Easter 1940.*

I also remember going with him on his motorcycle to a farm by Munich to look at a piece of machinery that was for sale. On the way home, it was getting dark and the motorcycle's lights weren't working for some reason. We stopped at a service station in Alsen and tried to fix them. We soon decided that if we drove really fast, we could get home before it was completely dark. When we got home, it was really dark, but it was an exciting ride! I always had the impression that Milo enjoyed a challenge, and it was even more desirable if there was a bit of danger involved.

Another memory involves the Chrysler coupe he had that must have had a bad journal on the crankshaft. Every so many miles he would pull off and put a new insert in a rod bearing. The whole operation took about twenty minutes.

Lars Milo and his siblings attended Prospect School which was about one mile from their home. After returning home from the TB Sanitarium in the spring of 1934, he continued his education at Prospect School until he started high school at which time he and his brothers and his siblings attended Prospect School which was about one mile from their home. Their education there was interrupted when they had to spend time in the TB sanitarium from 1932. Lars returned home in the spring of 1934 and continued his education at Prospect School until he started high school at which time they had to commute to Edmore, nine miles away. Only one of his report cards from that period was saved and that was for his sophomore year, 1938-39. His final grades for that year were: Geometry—95, World History—85, English—85, Biology—75. After his sophomore year, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and spent one year in Kramer, N.D. He was trained to operate heavy equipment there while he continued his high school education. He was there from October 6, 1939 to August 26, 1940.

He returned to Edmore and graduated from High School in June, 1941. During the time that he and his brothers attended High School in Edmore, they stayed in the house owned by Sven Veen and did light housekeeping. It was from this house that they had their 9-10 mile walk home every Friday evening which helped to inspire the hero image in the eyes of their younger brother. They had to walk back again in time for school on Monday morning!



*(from top left) Ann, Arnold, Gina, Lars, Milo, Bertha, Odin, Franklin, George, Maida, Ole.*



### 3. *Military Service*

Lars Milo stayed at home for one year after graduating from High School and took a correspondence course in electronics. The school sent his name to the government and as a result, he took and passed a Civil Service exam for pre-radar training, and went on to take a course at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks (September 1942 to January 1943).

The date of his enlistment into the army was October 15, 1942 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The course at UND was followed by more training at the University of Colorado, and finally induction into the Army Signal Corps on May 10, 1943. He was stationed at Camp Kohler in California. He expected to be sent on to radar school when he completed basic training since all his training until then had been for this specific purpose. But, to his disappointment, he was sent as a truck driver in the Reno, Nevada and Sacramento, California area.

This experience also served him well in later years, but at the time he was disturbed by the inefficiency of the army.

During his basic training, he had some problems with a certain sergeant who could not say the name "Ingulsrud" correctly. He would yell out a command, sometimes specifically calling on "Inslagard." Lars refused to answer to that name so the sergeant repeated it. When Lars continued to ignore the command, he had to do many push-ups or was assigned to KP (kitchen duty) as punishment.

In September 1943, he was accepted into the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. That program washed out and Lars was shipped to a camp in Oklahoma as a member of the infantry in March, 1944. He became Private First Class on August 25, 1944. After working as an instructor in the training program there (acting sergeant and squad leader of the 2nd Mortar Squad Co.), he applied for the paratroops, was accepted and sent to Fort Benning, Georgia on September 5 and finished training there in December, 1944.

In a diary that he kept during this time, he indicated that the training was not easy. In their second week they started "A" stage which included rope climbing, judo, and calisthenics. His diary entries were brief:

Started A stage. It's really tough ... getting tougher ... tougher yet ... worst day so far ... not quite so bad.



*Lars in the US army, 1944*

The following week, his tone was changing:

Started B stage. A lot of fun...

By the time he started jumping from planes, his excitement was evident. On October 9th, he wrote:

Made my first jump from a plane today. A swell jump!

The rest of the week was more of the same:

Second jump today. A wind blowing. I came in like a ton of bricks ...

Third jump—not so good either ... Fourth jump—beautiful! ... Night jump, lots of fun!

At the end of that second week, he received his wings. His jump record in his parachute book indicates that he made four more jumps—a total of nine.

In February, 1945, he was shipped with the 513th Airborne Signal Company to Europe; they needed radio repairmen and so he and one other fellow were in charge of repairing and maintaining all the equipment. They were held back from all jumps in case any of the equipment would malfunction, and then they could be dropped in to the area where they were needed. As a result, they had many long waits at the various airports—one lasted forty-two days. He was stationed at Auxere, France and later at Metz, Germany. and at other stations for short periods.

In August 1945, he returned to the United States, and on his way across the Atlantic, the news came to the ship that the Japanese had surrendered. He had applied for direct shipment to Japan, but that had been denied because of the plans to drop the atomic bomb. He was assigned to Fort Bragg, N.C. where he helped make up the Victory Loan Train for the 7th War Bond Drive, his job being the building and wiring of amplifiers. Because there were some generator problems, he was sent along on the Victory Loan Train and traveled all over the south-eastern part of the United States. That was one part of his army career that he thoroughly enjoyed. On January 31, 1946, he was released from the service at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.

His discharge papers list the following under *Decorations and Citations*: American Theatre Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre Service Medal.

## 4. *A Spiritual Journey*

After his release from the army, Lars returned to Edmore, N.D. where he worked for the Rural Electrical Agency and tried to farm. It became a very difficult period in his life—not because he didn’t like the work. He had big plans about forming his own electrical company—and thus earning enough money so that he could afford to farm—that had always been a dream of his. But the struggle at this time was a spiritual one.

Lars’ family were members of Concordia Lutheran Church in Edmore (of the ELC synod) and it was there that he was baptized on June 2, 1923. Because they lived ten miles from town and the church, it was difficult to take an active part in the activities of the congregation. But his father taught the children the foundations of their faith. His father knew the Bible well, but he didn’t say so much about it—he lived his faith in a quiet way. There was family instruction in the catechism, but no real family devotions, though his father always led the family in daily prayers at meal time, and his mother taught them to pray before going to bed. Lars was thankful that he was brought up to fear and love God and he often said: “I’ve never known a time when I didn’t believe. I’ve always known that Jesus is with me.”

His stay in the TB Sanitarium became very significant as while they were there, they received regular church and Sunday School instruction for the first time. When they were on the farm, one of the pastors of the church in Edmore was Pastor Braaten for whom Lars had a great deal of respect. He was their pastor when Lars was confirmed on May 16, 1937.

In 1964, while Lars was on furlough from Japan and living in St. Paul, a biography of his life was written by William D. Montgomery, a Seminary student. During the interview for this biography, Lars told of the factors that had been an influence during his life that led him to enter foreign mission service. The following is an excerpt from that biography.

He was always interested in geography. As a youth, he also remembers attending a summer Bible Camp session near Valley City, N.D. at which Dr. A.S. Burgess of Luther Theological Seminary was a special speaker. He showed movies of the mission fields and led discussion groups on the subject. While attending college, he participated in a group called The Mission Crusaders, in which his knowledge of missions grew and he heard various mission speakers. However, he says that the idea of mission was planted by Rev. Braaten, whose first parish was the church in Edmore to which Lars and his family belonged. He confirmed Lars and had a great deal of influence on his life. A very conscientious pastor, he would come out to their neighborhood to hold ser-

vices, every other week in a school house. How did he interest Lars in mission work?

“By the fact that he kept coming out; you see he didn’t, like most pastors, urge you to come into town to go to church. He merely asked if there was somewhere we could meet and everybody came.”

They had Luther League out there, to which everyone came. Lars and his brother were very active and either one or both were officers of the League almost every year. They had to give the program, including Bible study, which forced them to “dig” in the Bible for something meaningful to present. “It was a good substitute because we didn’t go to church.”

Later on, the thought that there were still people who haven’t had a chance to hear the gospel and the fact that Jesus Christ has told us to go, “We’re not supposed to sit back and wait for them to ask us” prompted Lars to apply for the mission field. “I learned a mission ‘attitude’ from him (Pastor Braaten), rather than actual interest in missions.”

After he left home and went on for further training, he attended various Lutheran churches near each place where he was studying or stationed while in the army, or he would go to the base chapel. It was while he was in the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1943 that he met Dr. Beil, the President of the Kansas District of the United Lutheran Church, who was also the Lutheran Student Pastor at the University. Dr. Beil had a great influence on Lars’ theological development, and that influence continued for many years.

While Lars was stationed in Europe, he and the other men who were kept back from the front lines in order to be available to repair equipment had many long waits at various airports. These long waits were used very profitably though, because six or seven of them would spend their evenings in Bible study and discussion. Lars was strongly influenced by several Baptists in the group and began to think somewhat like they did, theologically. In the same group was Colonel Bradley, whom Lars respected as the best chaplain that he had in the service. He was a Presbyterian and gave sermons that Lars remembered for years afterwards. It was while he was stationed in Europe that he really started studying theology seriously. He had always read his Bible and carried it with him, but hadn’t really dug into it. It was at that point that he realized there were many viewpoints stemming from the same Bible and that the Lutheran doctrines and teachings about the sacraments were challenged by other groups. During the time that he traveled with the Victory Loan Trains, he and several of his friends again engaged in Bible study and attended churches wherever they could. He was trying to assimilate the various teachings—using the Lutheran catechism to check on the Baptist teachings which had influenced him.

*Go and make disciples...*

But the struggle that he was going through that first summer after his discharge from the army went even deeper than denominational differences. He tried to make a success of his electrical business, but nothing seemed to go right. He was difficult to work with, and family and friends wondered what was wrong. He had gradually come to realize that perhaps the Lord wanted him in the ministry—he had been fighting against it ever since he got out of the service. Two years earlier, a friend had suggested that he should become a preacher. But now it was the Lord calling him, and he reached the point where



he could not go on with anything else. Whenever he read his Bible, the only verse he seemed to see was “Go, and make disciples.” One night, as he prayed, he gave up his own plans and told the Lord that he would go. He got up early the next morning, rode his motorcycle to Moorhead, Minnesota, and registered at Concordia College for the pre-seminary course. When he came home that evening, at the supper table he told his family about his decision. For awhile, everyone was quiet. Then his father broke the silence with “I thought a preacher had to be able to sing.” The laughter which followed broke the tension after his announcement, but mostly the tension in Lars’ heart was eased as he was heeding what he believed to be God’s call. Now his sights were set on the ministry, and it was towards this goal that he moved during the next seven years.



*Concordia College Graduate, 1949*

He entered Concordia College in September, 1946—starting college all over again. Since he was under the GI Bill, finances were not a concern. His theological questions continued, but he came under the teaching of Dr. Johnshoi, the head of the philosophy department, who helped him in his understanding of baptism, and also interested him in Philosophy. The head of the English department, Dr. Bale, was also an influence on him and was a factor in Lars majoring in English.

Perhaps his most challenging study at college was Greek—required for anyone going on to Seminary. He always had difficulty with languages, and Greek was especially hard. Besides the studies, however, he made many good friends while at Concordia, friendships that have continued through the years.



# Part II

*Selma*



## 5. German and Swedish Roots

**T**he original patriarch of the Beil family, Balthasar Beil, came to the United States in 1737 from Brandau, Germany. He had signed an agreement to work for three to four years for the person who had paid his ocean passage.

Selma's paternal grandfather, William A. Beil, grew up in a farming family near Allentown, Pennsylvania. His family moved to Indiana where he met his wife, Alice Ruch. Due to the ill health of Alice and son, Charles, they moved their farm animals and equipment, by train, to Salina, Kansas in the 1880's.

Selma's father, Alfred John Beil was born on December 15, 1893 in Salina, Kansas. He received his A.B. degree from Midland College, Fremont, Nebraska in 1921. He went on to Central Seminary in Fremont and graduated with a B.D. degree in 1923. In 1935, he received his D.D. degree from Midland College. After ordination in 1923, he served churches at Hutchison, Kansas; Champaign, Illinois; Des Moines, Iowa; Topeka, Kansas; and Lawrence, Kansas. During the time he was in Champaign, he was also director of the Lutheran Student Association at the University of Illinois. He served with his brother-in-law, Pastor Frederick J. Weertz at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines at two different times. Later he was elected Iowa District President and served in that position for ten years.

Selma's maternal grandfather, Louis T. Bang, grew up in St. Louis, Missouri where his father and brother were medical doctors. His father served in the Civil War as a surgeon. Louis moved to Kansas because he could speak German and being a merchant, the German people became his customers. He became a community leader, serving as President of the Emporia School Board although he had very little formal education. He started the Lions Club of Emporia and was very active in the Lutheran Church. He and his son, Read, had a clothing business named "Bang & Bang." "Business is Booming" was the Bang motto.

Louis met and married a Swedish young woman, Selma Serena Lundquist. A few years earlier, she had traveled alone from Sweden at the age of twelve. Her mother had died when she was only four years old. Her father was very poor, and some time after the mother died, he had sent the older sister, Emma, to Kansas to work at a hotel run by a Swedish family. A couple of years later, he sent Selma to Kansas also. The story is told that her family had packed a large basket of food for her to take on the ship. She thought the food was to last for the whole voyage so she ate only a little each day. Some other passengers noticed that she was not going for meals and informed her that meals were included in her passage. Someone met the ship in New York and put her on the train for Kansas. She could not



*Louis and Selma Bang*

speak any English, but arrived safely in Madison, Kansas, where the Stolpes who owned the hotel gave her a home. They treated Selma like one of their own daughters. They sent her to school and provided for her generously. They gave her a big wedding at the Stolpe Hotel when she married Louis Bang. A newspaper article about the wedding reported: "Only a few of the most intimate friends consisting of some of the best people in the city and vicinity were permitted to witness the ceremony."

It seems that there was musical talent in Grandma Bang's family as her uncle was a famous blind fiddler who was a favorite of the King of Sweden.

Selma's mother, Augusta Marie Bang was born on October 28, 1899 in Emporia, Kansas. Her only sister, Dorothea, married Dr. Frederick Weertz, and they had one son, Louis, now known as Roger Williams, the pianist. She also had one brother, Read Bang, who with his wife Shirley became Vice Presidents and Managers of the World Book Encyclopedia company in New York.

Augusta and Alfred Beil were married on June 22, 1922. At that time, Alfred was studying at the Seminary in Fremont, graduating the following year. They moved to their first parish, Zion Lutheran Church in Hutchison, Kansas, and it was while they were there that their daughter, Selma Elizabeth was born on April 15, 1924.



*Alfred and Augusta Beil's wedding*

## 6. Wheel Chair Childhood

Selma was born a “blue baby,” a condition caused in her case by an undersized artery between her heart and lungs which permitted only thirty percent of the necessary oxygen to reach her lungs. She spent most of her childhood in a bed or wheelchair. She attended Smouse Opportunity school in Des Moines, Iowa during the years, 1930—37, when her father was associate pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church. According to a letter that she wrote to her Grandmother Bang shortly after Christmas, 1935, she had some of her schooling at home. She wrote:



*Selma Elizabeth*

Hope you had a very Merry Christmas. Did I tell you I have a teacher now. She comes every other day. They are sending the bedside teachers from Smouse School. I got so many nice things for Christmas.

Love, Selma

Her brother, Carl relates some family stories from that period:

The first I can remember is in Des Moines about 1935. We lived near a school for the handicapped. Since Selma could not walk across the room without turning blue, she was able to attend this school in a wheel chair. As I remember,



*Selma and her mother*

she spent most of the time in bed or in her wheel chair. She had a small room in the back of the house. The folks and I had an adjacent bedroom and the maid had the front bedroom. It was far from ideal, but we needed help because the church expected Mom to be involved in all the women’s activities and the church school



*Alfred Beil holding Selma, Augusta holding Louis Weertz*



*Selma and her parents while in Champaign, Illinois*

program. We had lots of visitors who came to see Selma. It was a treat when the folks stayed home to play with us. All the rest of the time, it was a rat race. Mom was under the gun with her sister in town, too.

In 1937, we moved to Topeka, Kansas, where Dad served First Lutheran Church, staying there only three years. Any spare time the folks had, they spent trying to find a doctor that could help Selma. I remember going to Kansas City to a Chinese Herb doctor, and many other questionable practitioners.

In 1940, Dad was called to a bigger church in Lawrence, Kansas. The day we moved, Dad packed the back seat and trunk of a car solid. All four of us, including the dog, sat in the front seat. As we were going down the highway, another car in the opposite direction passed and drove directly at us. Dad headed

for the ditch but didn't make it. We were hit in the side near the back but all survived because we were sitting in the front seat. Dad walked down the aisle of his first church service with a limp and a black eye.

Lawrence was a great town to grow up in during the early '40's. The country was at war and there was plenty of work for the young boys when they were not going to school or playing ball. My grandparents lived with us for awhile. They helped with Selma and the household chores. Selma attended high school in her wheel chair and when she needed to go to the second floor of the school for a class, she was carried by two football players of her class.

Selma listened to the radio a lot during her shut-in years. It was in 1944 when she heard about the operation on blue babies, and the rest is history.



*Selma at age 10*



*Carl and Selma*

The Beil family lived in Lawrence, Kansas from 1940-47 while Dr. Beil was pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church. In a letter to her Grandmother Beil in July, 1943, Selma reveals how serious her condition often became:

Dear Grandma, I have been in bed a week now. I had been so tired for several days and then on Monday morning it seemed all at once like I couldn't breathe. Mother called the doctor. When he came, he called the fire department and they brought out the oxygen tank. About a half hour later I quit gasping but was quite weak. I feel better today and get up for meals, but guess I will have to take it slow for a while.

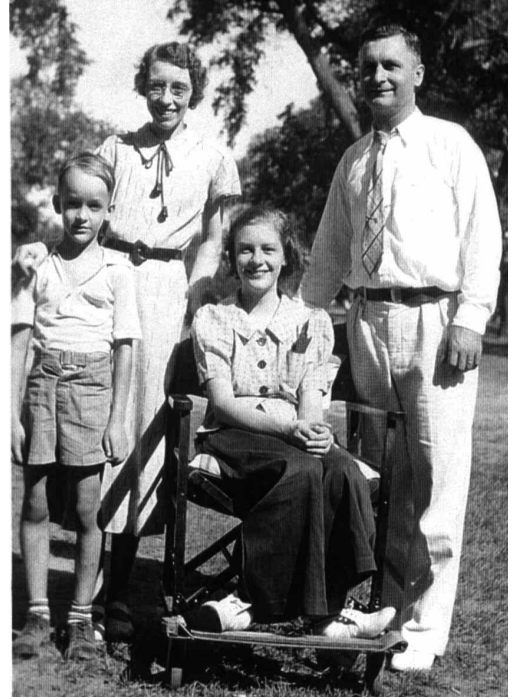


In 1945, when Selma was twenty years old, the long chain of events toward her recovery began. After she had heard the broadcast about a new operation for “blue babies,” the Beils contacted doctors who put them in touch with Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland.

Selma and her mother made the trip to Baltimore in early October, 1945. Soon after, on October 16 she became the first adult to undergo the operation to correct her heart defect. Dr. Alfred Blalock, a noted surgeon, and Pediatrician Helen P. Taussig were the doctors whose famous breakthrough in heart surgery came to bear their names—the Blalock Operation.

While in Baltimore, Mrs. Beil stayed at a Deaconess Home when she wasn’t at the hospital with Selma, and they both stayed there after Selma was released from the hospital until she was strong enough to travel back to Kansas.

While in the hospital, she wrote letters to family members back home. In a letter to the Bang family on November 10, she



*Beil family*



*Beil and Bang Family Thanksgiving*

*Standing: Read Bang, Dorothea, Fred Weertz, Augusta, Otgers*

*Seated left to right: Selma, Louie (Roger), Aunt Hulda, Louis Bang, Selma Bang, Mr. Smith (Shirley’s father) Shirley, Daisy Smith (Shirley’s mother)*

*Foreground: Jane, Laura Anne Bang, Carl, Betty Bang*

thanked them for gifts that they had sent. One was a guest towel which she said she would take home with her and put in her hope chest "because now I have new hope in my chest." She added:

I am feeling better all the time. I was up in the chair all day and surely hope they let me walk soon. It works swell the few steps I've taken. I hope to be home by Christmas, but don't know when I will get the green light to leave the hospital but they say it won't be long.

November 12: I'm feeling so much better and it really is a thrill to get to walk. I've been on this floor longer than anyone now, so I think it's time I'm leaving. You should see the big trays of food they bring me and lots of vitamins.

Everything has been so wonderful that every day is going to be my Thanksgiving Day.

After the successful surgery, Selma left her wheel chair and often afterwards referred to that happy day as her "birthday," for it was the beginning of a busy, useful adult life.

A more personal touch to her story came in Christmas letters sent to their friends and relatives, written by her father, Dr. Beil:

December 20, 1945: TOGETHER is the meaningful word in our family this Christmas. After being separated for two and a half months, the family was reunited December 13. This time, not like in marriage, "for better or for worse," but definitely for better.

The doctors said to Selma that when she has had plenty of time to get over the operation and build up some surplus energy that they would be greatly disappointed if she could not walk a mile without stopping to rest. Well, she has not yet experienced the thrill of walking a mile, but she is enjoying doing more than she has ever done before with less ex-

haustion. Everyone around here can see that she looks much better. Her weight has increased 14 pounds.

If any of you have experienced limited health you can understand why this is such a happy Christmas. It is because we feel that we are enjoying one of God's greatest gifts, better health for a member of our family. For this gift, we are singing besides Christmas carols, the Doxology, "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow."

December, 1946: We are happy to report that Selma has a rosy school-girl complexion. We continue to thank God for the way He used Doctors Blalock and Taussig to provide approaching normal health for her. She is doing regular freshman work at Midland College and part time office work for the athletic coach.



*Confirmation—Lawrence, Kansas*



*High School Graduation*



## 7. A Dinner Invitation

**I**t was in September of 1943 that Selma and Lars first met. Lars had started studying at the University of Kansas in Lawrence and Selma's father, Dr. Beil, was the Lutheran Student pastor at the University. He and a friend were invited to the Beil home for dinner one Sunday and for some reason, Lars was very quiet and was not taking part in the conversation. Perhaps it was because he was grieving the death of his brother, Odin, who had been killed on August 18 that year during a mountain climbing training exercise in Colorado. Selma noticed his quietness and as she passed him a dish of pickles at the table, she attempted to cheer him up with some humor and said, "Have a pickle—puss!" That seemed to relax the situation, and they became friends. The friendship developed into a deeper relationship as the notations in Lars' diary during this time indicated. There were frequent visits to the Beil home and times when he would take Selma for drives. By January, 1944, they were dating regularly on week-ends with frequent phone calls during the week. So it was with a great deal of reluctance that Lars had to leave Lawrence in March to go to Oklahoma for further training and a year later, he was sent to Europe. During this courtship, Selma was still an invalid in a wheel chair. Lars learned to love her for her beautiful personality and her happy and cheerful disposition.



*Baltimore, at about time of surgery*



*After surgery—winter 1945-46*

After Lars returned from Europe, and while traveling with the Victory Loan Train in the south-eastern parts of the United States during the autumn of 1945, he was able to visit Selma while she was in the hospital.

After recovering from the surgery, Selma attended Midland College in Fremont, Nebraska in 1946. She went on to study at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa where the Beil family lived from the fall of 1947.

When Lars had been studying in Lawrence, he was a regular participant at the Lutheran Student Association at the university where Dr. Beil served as pastor. Selma was also active in that association, so it seemed appropriate that in early July, 1947, Dr. and Mrs. Beil

invited this group to their home for an informal gathering following their meeting, and at that time announced the engagement of Selma to Lars, approximately four years from the time they had first met. Selma was employed that summer in the office of the county superintendent of schools. For the next two years, she continued her studies at Drake University while Lars studied at Concordia College.

December, 1947—Dr. Beil wrote:

At the present, our family is scattered over a large area. Selma is living in the west end of Des Moines. Augusta and Alfred are living in the northern part of the city, Carl is still in Lawrence, Kansas, and Mother Bang is visiting in Madison, Kansas. Dad Bang's health continued to fail during the summer, and on August 6, he was called home to the Church Triumphant.



*Newspaper photo with Aunt Dorothea in Des Moines*

December, 1948:



*Graduation from Drake*

You will need good eyes to properly record the vision of our next character. As you see her now, you will observe a single likeness of her. Early in August, an optical illusion might cause you to see her double. The young man is Lars Ingulsrud, a former Army Specialized Training Program student at the University of Kansas, an overseas paratrooper, and at the present he is a pre-theological senior at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Selma expects to receive two degrees next summer. The first one will be an A.B. degree, with a major in religious education, to be conferred upon her by Drake University. The other will be her M.R.S. degree to be conferred upon her at St. John's Lutheran Church.

The summer of 1949 was very busy as they both graduated from their respective colleges, Lars' graduation from Concordia College was on June 6, and Selma's took place on August 26, after their honeymoon. They were married on July 31.

Dr. Beil reported in their Christmas letter 1949:

To the next youngest goes the prize for having run her race well. This time the reward is in the form of a man-sized package. On Sunday, July 31, following the 11 o'clock service, Lars and his two brothers were waiting at the chan-

cel steps while a proud father walked down the aisle with his precious daughter. Mother Beil had been ushered down the aisle ahead of the bridal procession. Selma's uncle, the Reverend Frederick J. Weertz, read the service to the place where I answered, "Her mother and I give Selma in marriage to Lars Ingulsrud." From that point I stepped before the altar and conducted the rest of the service. That was a blessed moment in our lives because that experience was only made possible as a result of Selma's successful heart operation in 1945. The young couple is now living "happily ever afterwards" in St. Paul, Minnesota, where Lars is a Junior in Luther Seminary and Selma is working at the Augsburg Publishing House.



*Wedding at St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines, Iowa*





# Part III

*Lars and Selma's Life Together*



## 8. Seminary Days

In September, 1949, Lars and Selma moved to St. Paul where Lars started his seminary studies. They lived at 2269 Brewster Street in a duplex that they shared with good friends, Dick and Dorothy Waag. In their second year, Douglas and Mavis (Solveig) Swendseid lived in Waag's part of the house while Waags were on internship. Selma rejoiced in being able to lead a normal active life, which until just a few years earlier had seemed an impossibility. Their guest book for those three years is full of names of friends and relatives who visited them, so the hospitality that she had learned in her parsonage home continued in their own home.

In those days, costs of a seminary education were not as high as in the 1990's. There was a shortage of pastors so the church provided tuition for any student who was accepted into the Seminary. The students had to buy the books necessary for study, and had to provide for their own living expenses. Having served in the army during the war, Lars was under the GI bill, so received some help. In November of that first year, he received \$430 from the state of North Dakota which was a special veterans' bonus. Selma worked at Augsburg Publishing House until December, then changed to ELC Films until March. At that time, her doctor ordered her to quit work as she was pregnant and was getting too tired. Lars tried his hand at selling a Biblical Commentary, *The Book of Life* and was fairly successful in that enterprise. In December of his second year, he worked at the Post Office during the year-end rush.

All first-year students were assigned to a church in order to get practical experience, and Lars' assignment was to Bethlehem Lutheran in Minneapolis, where he taught Sunday School. During his last two years, he often went to churches out of town to fill in where there was no pastor. He went most frequently to Park Rapids. After his first year at Seminary, he and Selma spent the summer in New England, North Dakota and had Vacation Bible School in three different places—two weeks at each. They stayed in homes of parishioners and also helped with Sunday services. After his second year, Lars served a church in West Des Moines, under Dr. Beil's supervision. Many in Lars' class at Seminary were veterans as he was, and because of their age and experience, they were exempt from the year of internship.



*Bringing Home Ruth Marie*

Though Selma's strength was limited, she kept very active. When she had to quit work early in her pregnancy, her diary notes revealed that she was often very tired. She never complained to any one else, but would stay in bed and rest and then continue with her daily house-keeping and other activities. In the early 1950's, though there were a lot of quite modern conveniences, there were many aspects of house-work that were not easy. She spent many hours a week ironing clothes. Lars usually helped her with the wash and hanging the clothes out—no automatic washers or dryers at that time—but then the clothes would have to be "sprinkled" and when sufficiently damp, ironed. No steam irons yet! In the spring, to save on dry-cleaning bills, they—like many others at that time—cleaned their winter clothes in high-test gasoline!

They enjoyed the friendship of other Seminary student families—most of them young couples who, like them, were just starting to raise their families. There were many coffee parties and meals together. Sem wives, picnics, movies, evenings of games and pop-corn, various church activities all made for a busy life. Lars and Selma joined St. Anthony Park Lutheran church, but often visited other churches as well. Besides their Seminary contacts, there were visits from family members. Lars' father and brothers sometimes came to the cities for farm conventions. It was during this time that his brother, Ole, stayed with them for some months while he worked in St. Paul. The Beils also came for special occasions. Trips to Edmore and Des Moines were usually made during holidays. (On one such trip, they had three blow-outs on their way back from Des Moines—and another time, one blow-out, and one flat-tire.) Their three years at 2269 Brewster Street were busy, but very happy.

Selma went to a doctor regularly while in St. Paul, and whenever they returned to Des Moines. Ever since her surgery, she sometimes had attacks of *tachycardia*—rapid heart beat. When that happened, her parents and Lars had learned how to stop it by pressing on the jugular vein. These attacks usually lasted only a few minutes, but occasionally lasted hours.

Selma kept in contact with Dr. Alfred Blalock, and Dr. Helen B. Taussig, the doctors who had performed the surgery. On November 15, 1949, Dr. Taussig wrote in a letter to Selma:

I have been meaning to write to you for a long time to congratulate you on your wedding, and to wish you all happiness and joy. Please accept my belated, but nonetheless sincere greetings now. When you have an opportunity to, we certainly would be glad to check you here. You will be glad to hear that one of our patients has been married and had a baby and went through pregnancy without any unusual difficulties. I hope some day you will be able to have a family.

That hope expressed by Dr. Taussig and fervently shared by Lars and Selma became a reality on September 14, 1950, when Selma gave birth to Ruth Marie—a most wonderful proof that another "impossibility" had become a "possibility" in the form of this healthy baby girl. Grandma Beil and Uncle Carl came to see little Ruth Marie when she was only four days old, and Grandma stayed for ten days to help. Then in October, Grandpa and Grandma Beil and Great-Grandma Bang came again for just two days and on October 19, Ruth Marie was baptized. The service was on a week-day, so only a few close friends joined the family when Dr. Beil baptized his first grand-child. Lillian Anderson, a family friend was the sponsor (god-mother).

After Ruth Marie's birth, Selma wrote to Dr. Blalock and received this reply from him:

Thank you ever so much for writing to us in detail about your condition. A number of the points which you mention in your letter are of considerable interest scientifically since you are the first patient with this condition to have given birth to a child. Needless to say, I am tremendously pleased with the way you and your family are getting along and I am sure Dr. Taussig shares my feeling. With all good wishes to you and your family...

Later that year, Dr. Blalock wrote a letter thanking Selma for the Christmas card that had their picture on it, and he requested:

If you could spare a larger picture of you, your husband and your baby, I would like very much to have it.

It was obvious that Dr. Blalock continued to have a special interest in his former patient who had been a part of medical history.



*Four Generations of Bang/Beil women—Selma, Ruthie, Augusta Beil and Selma Bang*



## 9. *Where to serve?*

As they neared the completion of Lars' seminary training, they were facing the decision as to where they would serve in ministry. Lars had considered foreign missions as a possibility from the time he first decided to enter the ministry. He had never discounted it, even in light of Selma's health condition. He knew that calls for various positions would start coming in during the last year of Seminary. Later in 1964, in the Montgomery biography, he described his feelings about the mission call:

Being a volunteer by nature, I felt that first of all I should volunteer for world missions and then if that didn't work out and I didn't get a call from there, then I would go elsewhere. It just seemed a matter of course that I should put in my name first; just as a matter of responsibility.

When they enquired at the world mission office, Dr. Syrdal was concerned about Selma's health. After a thorough medical examination, Dr. James Myhre gave her the following report on June 12, 1951:

It was a pleasure to see you doing so well for such a long time after the splendid Blalock operation. Your cardiac status seems quite satisfactory, including vital capacity, cardiac fluoroscopy, electrocardiogram and circulation time. The remainder of your physical examination showed everything to be in good order.....

It is our opinion that you are doing quite well but probably should not leave this country for long periods of time away from enlightened medical care. We have informed Dr. Syrdal and want you to know that we do not feel that this detracts any from your good general physical condition.

In response to the letter from Dr. Myhre sent to the Board of Foreign Missions, Dr. Syrdal wrote the following on July 26, 1951:

We received from Drs. Ylvisaker and Myhre your health report some time ago. There were a few unfavorable findings most of them referring back to the former heart ailment from which they claim you have made a very good recovery.

As their final recommendation they state that they do not recommend you for mission work. In reference to this statement they make the further declaration: "This patient has an excellent functional recovery from her congenital heart disease. Because of the few patients who have received this operation and the short time that has followed, their eventual

prognosis must of necessity be guarded. She should probably live in an area where good enlightened medical care is available because of possibilities of future complications."

Our Board of Foreign Missions is of course dependent upon the doctors' recommendation concerning the possibility of missionary service. Even though we do have some mission fields with medical doctors, I do not know if we would qualify as having an area where good enlightened medical care is available. There is evidently here reference to specialists that might take care of a periodic check on your health and general condition from time to time.

We would be happy to hear from you again as to your reactions. May God guide you and give you and the Board of Foreign Missions wisdom in light of this recommendation from the doctor.

Most people would be discouraged at this point and not pursue the prospect of foreign mission service any farther. It would make sense to start looking for places of service in the home-land. But not so with Lars and Selma. Upon receipt of the letter from Dr. Syrdal, Selma wrote again to Dr. Blalock:

It seems that each time I am faced with a decision in regard to the extent of my physical ability, I feel that your advice would be of much greater value to me than the same words from anyone else.

My husband, Lars, will be graduated from the theological seminary next spring. In recent months he has maintained an ever-increasing interest in foreign mission work. He has conferred with his instructors and the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board in regard to this as a life work. He also informed them of my past and present physical conditions. They suggested that I take the complete physical examination which all prospective missionaries must pass. This examination was made by Drs. Ylvisaker and Myhre of Minneapolis who make all the examinations for our Mission Board.

In reporting the results of the examination, I quote from Dr. Myhre's letter: "It was a pleasure to see you doing so well for such a long time after the splendid Blalock operation....."

It has been almost six years since my operation and my only check-up at Johns Hopkins was the following year. I realize that your only knowledge of my present condition is through Dr. Paul Dwan and I have not been in his office for a year. However, we feel that your counseling in this matter would be of great assistance to us. I have felt so very well that it stimulates me to do many things I never dreamed I could. Nevertheless, if there is a possibility of losing this wonderful new-found health, I surely wish to protect it as far as possible. I realize that this surgery is yet so recent that one probably could not predict its exact outcome. Your opinion in this matter will help us greatly.

We do not at this time have any definite field of service in mind. Dr. Myhre feels that in the event we should go, it must be where there would be enlightened medical care. Lars is to meet with the Mission Board in October in regard to Dr. Myhre's findings and to discuss the location of our service.

We are spending the summer with my family while Lars is supplying a church in West Des Moines. We are enjoying this church work and feel



we are profiting from the experience very much. Our little Ruth Marie will be a year old next month. She is so active and seems to have limitless energy. She walks well with very little aid and indicates she will start on her own any time.

Our appreciation for what you have done in the past is beyond expression and we also thank you for any counseling you can give us for the future.

Dr. Blalock's response came in just a few days:

It was a pleasure to receive your letter and also the snapshot of you and your growing child. I am so pleased with the result of your examination. It sounds to me as though you are doing superbly.

I personally feel that it would be better for you and your family to remain in this country. I say this despite the fact that you are getting along so beautifully, and I think you will continue to get along well. I feel that Dr. Taussig is able to give you a better opinion than I and, hence I am forwarding your letter to her. I believe she will agree that it will be better for you to remain in the United States.

Please let me know your final decision.

One week later, Dr. Taussig's letter came, with perhaps a hint of encouragement:

Dr. Blalock referred your letter of August 10 to me. I am indeed glad that you are doing so well, and having such a great enjoyment in life.

My suggestion would be to wait and see where your husband may be sent, and then perhaps you could arrange to come back and be checked in my clinic before you make the final decision. I do feel that it would probably be wise for you not to go where life is extremely hard, and frankly, I suspect such is true in most of the places that foreign missionaries are likely to be sent. However, it almost seems to me the question is what is of greatest significance to you in life, and furthermore would your mission grant some provision for your return to this country by air should any change in your condition deem it necessary for you to return here promptly.

I really could judge better if I had had the opportunity to examine you myself, but all of the reports that I have reviewed indicate that you have attained excellent results, and are in good physical condition. I hope that next time you return for a check up, you will plan to come when I am in Baltimore and I can see you myself.

Later, in October, Lars met with the Board of Foreign Missions. Dr. Syrdal wrote a letter following that meeting and explained that they were not able to issue him a call at that time "because of circumstances that you are well acquainted with.." The Board, however, did defer action in order to more thoroughly investigate the possibilities of their service abroad, which would depend largely on the doctor's decision concerning Selma's health. Since they preferred having the opinion of two doctors, the Board offered to pay the full travel expenses, and the cost of the examination to have Selma go to Baltimore to be examined by the specialist who performed the operation. Dr. Syrdal closed his letter with this note of guarded encouragement:

We trust that you will accept this offer of the Board, if you still feel that it is God's will that you leave for the foreign mission field that we may together very carefully determine His will on the basis of men whose judgment we must trust in reference to the physical condition of our missionary candidates.

Lars and Selma lost no time, then, in writing to Dr. Blalock and Dr. Taussig to report on the Board's recommendation, and to explain their feelings with regard to their plans.

I feel I owe you an apology for failing to keep a promise I made last year. At that time you asked me to write about my condition on each of the anniversaries of my operation. My sixth anniversary was on October 16. The reason I didn't write at that time was that there had been no new developments in the question of our going abroad to the foreign mission field. Lars was to meet with the board in the near future and so I thought I would wait to write until after that. Thank you both very, very much for your kind letters in answer to my inquiry last summer. Lars has consented to dictate a letter, following mine, to state the problem as it now stands.

I am still feeling very well. Lars is busy in school and Ruth Marie is full of energy as ever. She began walking at the age of eleven months and now at fourteen months she climbs on the chairs and also makes attempts at saying words. Besides caring for her and keeping house I take care of a seven-month-old boy five days a week while his mother works in an office and his father attends the seminary. I enjoy having him here very much and he and Ruthie help to entertain each other. We feel it is a good arrangement since it doesn't seem to tire me. I can report another wonderful year as far as good health is concerned.

Lars added: Selma and I have felt the call to service in the foreign mission field. In meeting with the Board of Foreign Missions last week, Selma's heart condition was the primary topic of discussion. They had only the report of Drs. Ylvisaker and Myhre referred to in the letter Selma wrote you last summer. They, naturally, were cautious and the Board desires that they have the word of two doctors where there may be some doubt as to the advisability of sending a candidate abroad and they have authorized, at their expense, to have Selma go to Baltimore to be examined by you.

We, personally, do not feel that work on some of our mission fields would be more strenuous than rural parish work on the Great Plains. However, malaria can be contacted on all our fields and the adjustment to a different culture is a hardship for some. All our fields are within two to four days, air travel, from New York. The fields are in Madagascar, Africa, South America, and Japan. Our missions in Africa are in the highlands of Tanganyika and the Sudan where the climate is not too adverse.

We wish to serve where the Lord wants us, and feeling the call to the foreign mission field, we want to go unless there is special danger to Selma's health in doing so.

Would you care to advise us without examining her or could the report of an examination by Dr. Dwan of Minneapolis sent to you suffice? Or would you prefer that Selma go to Johns Hopkins? We, naturally,

have much confidence in you and your judgment because of what you have done for Selma.

The Mission Board meets again in February and they wish to have a report by then. If you want Selma to come to Baltimore, would it be possible to have an appointment before the first of February?

Dr. Taussig promptly replied to their letter and assured them that it would be very helpful if she could examine Selma before responding to the Mission Board.

It is fair to say that I would be willing to give "no" for an answer without seeing you but hope if I see you I may be able to give "yes" for an answer. With this in mind, we are making an appointment for you at 9 a.m. on Monday, January 21, 1952.

Before Selma went to Baltimore for the examination, Dr. Paul Dwan in Minneapolis sent this report to Dr. Syrdal:

It is my opinion that Mrs. Lars Ingulsrud could safely accompany her husband to a foreign mission if the latter had adequate medical facilities. She has an operative congenital heart defect which has been successfully treated to the best of medical knowledge at the present time and I anticipate no further indication for surgery. In fairness to the family and yourselves, however, I feel that it should be borne in mind that this matter of judgment is difficult to make and if she were to have any trouble it would be only fair to her to have her return immediately to this country where she could get the best of medical attention.

Selma went to Baltimore for the scheduled appointment with Dr. Taussig on January 21 and about ten days later, Dr. Syrdal wrote to Lars and Selma with a report that they had received from the doctor:

We have received a full report from Dr. Helen B. Taussig. The report as a whole is very favorable. There are certain reservations given in a letter attached to the examination blank:

"Therefore I feel that it is entirely safe for her to go with her husband to foreign missions provided a few precautions are observed:

1. That should she need dental extraction she be brought into some medical center and given prophylactic penicillin the day before, the day of and for three days after dental extraction.....

2. That should she become pregnant she should also be brought to some major medical center for delivery. Again she should receive prophylactic penicillin, and otherwise be treated with the same precaution which any other woman should receive for delivery.

3. Should she at any time develop persistent unexplained fever, she should be immediately brought back to this country.

I believe it entirely safe for her to have all the usual immunizations and feel that she is taking no undue risk in joining her husband in his missionary work."

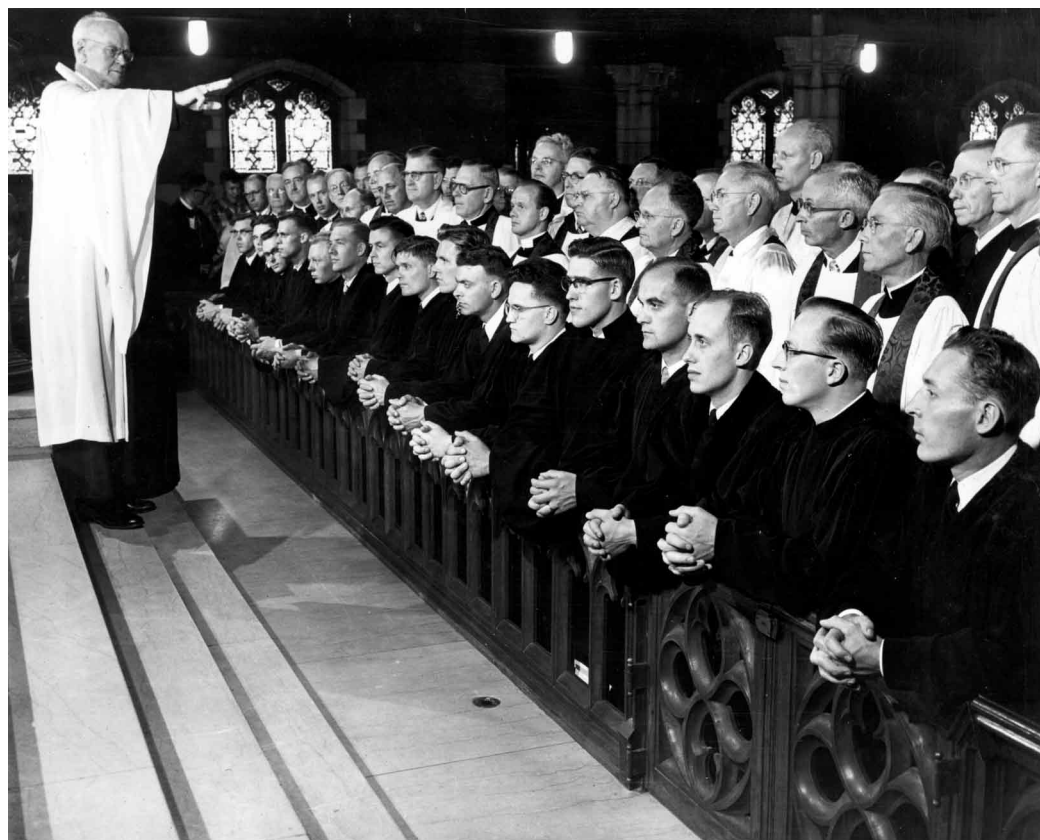
Dr. Syrdal concluded his letter with a note about the next meeting of the Board in February, stating that since they had already met with the Board, it would not be

necessary to meet with them again, but if they had any special word for the Board, they should submit it before the Board would meet. He asked them to continue to pray that God would guide the mission board as it again would consider them as candidates for foreign mission service.

The Board of Foreign Missions decided to extend them a call to serve in Japan, and they accepted. Lars had thought that it would be more suitable to go to Africa—perhaps his skills could be better used in a more primitive—at least a less technological culture. But he also realized that his interest was perhaps selfish as he was dreaming of climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, and doing some big game hunting! Since he had told the Board that he was willing to go wherever the need was greatest, he and Selma started to make preparations for going to Japan.

Lars graduated from Luther Seminary on May 18, 1952 and was ordained into the ministry of the gospel in the Evangelical Lutheran Church on June 8. The ordination service was held at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and included several of his classmates who were also going into foreign mission service.

On July 13, they were commissioned as missionaries to Japan. The service took place in Lars' home church, Concordia Lutheran, in Edmore, N.D. The officiating pastors were Dr. Rolf Syrdal, Pastor O. A. Crawford, Pastor H.O. Peterson, and Dr. Alfred Beil, Selma's father.



*Lars' ordination ceremony, Dr. Aasgard officiating (Lars seventh from right).*

# ***SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING***

into

**MISSIONARY SERVICE**

**Dr. R. A. Syrdal, Commissioner**



**Rev. and Mrs. Lars Milo Ingulsrud and Ruth Marie**

Called to Japan  
as a missionary of the  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Sunday, July 13, 1952**

**CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Edmore, North Dakota**



## 10. Mission: Japan

Lars and Selma said their farewells to their families, then drove to San Francisco and sailed for Japan on August first. They traveled on the *President Cleveland*, one of the American President Line's ships, where they enjoyed wonderful service and fabulous meals. It was truly a two-weeks dream vacation. The trip was also a time of good fellowship with friends as that year the ELC sent six missionary couples and three single lady missionaries to Japan. The men had all been classmates through seminary days—Russell and Alice Sanoden, Dick and Irene Nelson, Douglas and Solveig Swendseid, Paul and June Arnold, and Phil and Margaret Luttio. The single women were Andeline Arneson, Marion Bringle and Ruth Herbst (Roselyn Holte arrived in October). It was the largest group that the Mission Board had sent in one year. This was to be the beginning of their lives in the Japan Mission family.

Olaf Hansen had been sent to Japan in 1949 to begin the Japan Mission—there had been other Lutheran missionaries in Japan since before the war, and more had been sent when Japan opened to mission work after the war, but this was a new venture for the ELC synod. Olaf Hansen had been joined by his wife, Eleanor, Bernice Boyum and Lydia



Pictured is the group of ELC missionaries who sailed from San Francisco, bound for Japan, via American President Lines, SS *President Cleveland*, in August. Included were the following: The Rev. and Mrs. Russell Sanoden and Katherine (4 mos.); the Rev. and Mrs. Douglas Swendseid and Rachel (3 mos.); the Rev. and Mrs. Richard Nelson; the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Arnold and Nancy (18 mos.); the Rev. and Mrs. Philip Luttio and children, Stephen (8 mos.) and Karen (3 yrs.); Miss Margaret Herbst; Miss Adeline Arneson; Miss Marion Bringle. On hand to assist with embarkation and wish the group Godspeed was the Rev. Warren Heggen, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in San Francisco (extreme left).

Photo by Palmer, San Francisco

Hanson in 1950. Later the Tangs, Hylands, Lois Pedersen, Anna Marie Mitchell, Dorothea Ofstedal, Ken Stenberg, Aamodts, Johnsruds, Homerstads, Olsons, Vinges, Marion Hanson, Carola Mosby, Froydis Myhrwold, Anna Gulick, Davidsons, Berghs and Knutsons had also been sent and were busy studying the language and beginning the work of planting churches in Japan.

Lars and Selma and Ruthie disembarked from the President Cleveland in Yokohama on the morning of August 15, 1952. Other missionaries were there to meet them, and help them get through customs and all the details of entering a different country. They, along with Russ and Alice Sanoden were assigned to live at a mission house at 21 Maruyama Cho, Bunkyo Ku, in Tokyo. Andy Arneson, Marion Bringle, Ruth Herbst, and Roselyn Holte shared an apartment in the upstairs part of this large house that had been a hospital at one time. Bernice Boyum also had an apartment there. Their colleagues lived not too far away and since public transportation was convenient, there was a lot of visiting back and forth. It didn't take long to feel a part of this mission family.

Excerpts from their first Christmas letter to family and friends in the USA describe the beginning of their lives as missionaries:

We are thankful that it was possible for us to come to Japan. We drove to the west coast in July and sailed from San Francisco on August 1. Our whole journey was delightful. Soon after our arrival, we spent two weeks at Lake Yamanaka near Mt. Fuji where the other missionaries were vacationing. It was good to escape the Tokyo heat and we enjoyed meeting friends there as well as attending the ELC summer conference. Lars spent one day and one night climbing Mt. Fuji. It just whetted his "mountain-climbing" appetite and now he talks of climbing up another side next year.

Soon after our return to Tokyo, classes began at the language school. Lars goes to school every morning for three hours. I, Selma, go two afternoons a week for three hours. It takes us an hour each way to ride the train, street car, and walk. We also have a tutor for an hour every day. So most of our time is spent with the language since we must do much studying besides the time we are in school or with the tutor. Our tutor, Kaji-san, is a fine young man who is a senior in the School of Pharmacy at Tokyo University. He hopes to get a scholarship to study medicine in America. He is just beginning study of the Bible and catechism so we hope he will become a believing Christian and be baptized.

Lars teaches an English Bible class of students every Saturday evening. They are very intelligent and alert. Often their questions cause him to seek the answers in his theological books. So it is stimulating for all concerned.

We have a new member of the household now. Reiko-san is our maid and baby-sitter. She had been teaching kindergarten but wanted the experience of working in an American home. She does her work well, is cheerful, and like most Japanese has unlimited patience. She speaks as little English as we speak Japanese but we get along fine with the help of our dictionaries and using our hands. She and Ruthie get along best of all.

Ruthie seems to be quite satisfied in her surroundings. She talks and "performs" for anyone who will pay attention. One day some children walked to the market with us. When we returned I stepped into the *gen-*



*kan* to remove my shoes. When I opened the door to get Ruthie, she was hugging the little boy. She must have heard of brotherly love. That was an amusing incident but when we realize the love of God for all men—our brothers—we are saddened by some of the things we see here even as we regret some of the forms of idolatry in America. As we passed a Buddhist temple recently, we saw worshipers ring a bell and clap their hands to call attention of the gods to their prayers. Others were washing the face of a stone image to receive healing.

We hope that you will remember us in your prayers that we may be willing and diligent laborers in the kingdom, that many other workers will come to help in the burdens and rewards of this Calling, and that Japan may be won for Christ.

In these early days of missionary life in Japan, it was essential to have household help, so all missionaries had a maid. There were no super-markets at that time, and shopping meant going from one shop to the next—fruit store, vegetable store, meat store and any other store—until all the necessities were purchased. Many of the foods that Americans wanted were not available in the Japanese markets. There was one store in Tokyo that sold a lot of the staples for American diets (*Intermission*), so often the missionaries would go in the mission station wagon and shop at that store. The OSS (Overseas Supplies Store) in downtown Tokyo was another favorite shopping place during this time of adjusting to this new country. It was popular, too, because of its snack bar where American style hamburgers and ice-cream were sold. At this time, very few missionaries had cars, so they depended largely on public transportation, or getting rides with those who did have a vehicle.

Since the US military had several bases in the area, the missionaries often attended worship services and other meetings at Chapel Center, one of the main US chapels. Going there also put them in contact with service men with whom they sometimes visited, and had as guests in their homes. At Chapel Center, there was a monthly Clergy Dinner which included a special speaker. This was an enjoyable social event for transplanted Americans.

One of the changes that Lars and Selma had made in their life-style was related to Christmas shopping. That had to be done in October in order to reach relatives in the USA in time for Christmas. Prices in Japan were low, and there were so many interesting things to buy. Parcels from families at home arrived and they had a happy Christmas Eve opening their gifts. There were some packages and many cards and letters that would keep arriving until February. Lars and Selma told about their Christmas and New Year's celebration and plans for their work in their February form-letter:

On Christmas day the ELC missionaries in Tokyo met at the Maruyama Cho church for a communion service at 10:30 a.m. Following the service we all had dinner together in our apartment. The women had divided the work of preparing the meal so no one had too much to do. There was a gift exchange and the usual merry time that missionaries have when they get together.

New Years' day is a big festival day in Japan. Many women dress up in the traditional costumes with brightly colored kimonos and ornate hair-dos. It is also their custom to worship at the shrines that day. We went to the Meiji Shrine here in Tokyo to take some pictures, and as the thousands of people came pouring in (over 40,000 that day), I was almost overwhelmed by the magnitude of the work to which the Lord has

called us. We began talking about this and Olaf Hansen, our Superintendent reminded us that this was how it was when the first disciples went out. They faced the multitudes who worshiped at heathen altars. God was able to use them to change that situation, and we hope and pray that He will be able to use us to change this one. We are straining for the day when we can speak Japanese so that we can tell them of the One True God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent.

After New Year's, we went to Omi-Hachiman to visit Mareo Yoshida and his family. (Mareo had been at Seminary with us, and returned to Japan at the same time we came.) We also visited the Johnsruds in Hamamatsu, the Tangs in Nagoya, and the Berghs in Handa. Then we went to Shizuoka for the Annual Conference, January 5-9. The most important thing, as far as we were concerned, was the placing of new missionaries. We were assigned to specific areas to begin work as soon as we finish language school next summer. We were assigned to the Hamana Lagoon rural area and will use the Mobile Gospel unit which the Luther League is planning to send to Japan. There are about half a million people in this area and only two or three Christian workers, as far as we know. Talk about a field! We only hope and pray that we might be willing and able to be used by God to reach some of them with the saving knowledge of Christ.

We are all well and happy. Ruthie is the spark-plug of the family. She is learning three languages all at once: English, Japanese and Japanese-English. She hears Reiko-san try to speak English and tonight she was answering everything with "I donta know."

The new missionaries were gradually getting into more of the Japanese culture, learning to like Japanese food and green tea, as they continued to struggle with the language. On March 3 in that first year, they were invited to their tutor's home to celebrate Girls's Day. They enjoyed seeing the doll display and eating a Japanese meal with a Japanese family. Besides the Bible Class that Lars had at Maruyama Cho church, he also helped with other activities, and preached occasionally. Satoru Kishii, who later became the first pastor to be ordained from the ELC mission work, was his interpreter for some of those sermons.



*Ruthie surrounded by Japanese children.*

## 11. Hamana Lagoon Evangelism

In February, Lars made a trip to Hamamatsu to have his first look at the area where he was to begin work. This was near the area which his army unit had been scheduled to invade if the war with Japan had continued in 1945. Plans were being made for him to start services in that area, so on April 19, 1953, he took an early train, the *Tsubame*, to Hamamatsu and had his first service in the Hamana Lagoon area—in the village of Mikkabi. He continued going on a once-a-month basis until they moved to Hamamatsu in the fall.

An interesting project kept them busy one day in late April. A film company, Missions Visualized was in Japan to make a movie. They needed a scene of the missionaries arriving by ship in Yokohama, so again they had a chance to spend a little time on the *President Cleveland*, which was in port that day. The movie that they were working on was *Suzuki*, which was the story of a man in one of our churches at Shizuoka. It was a big project involving several of the missionaries which made it a busy time.

The biggest news of that year was the birth of John Eric on May 30. Lars had taken Selma to the Seventh Day Hospital on the 29th. The next day, Lars had to go to Hamamatsu to look at some property that the mission was considering buying for their house. John Eric was born at 5:45 p.m. weighing 5 pounds 14 ounces, and 18 1/4 inches long. Lars met his son at 9:30 that night after he returned from Hamamatsu. Selma described him as “a dear little boy.” Selma and JohnE were in the hospital for one week until the following Friday.

After arriving home, Selma carried on with her life as home-maker and language student, but she found that she needed quite a bit of rest. She was thankful for the faithful service of their maid, Reiko-san. She continued studying with a tutor, Hasegawa-san.

Lars was at language school until the first of July, and also studied with his tutor, Kajisan. He had found language study particularly difficult, and concluded that linguistics was definitely not his forte.



Lars and Selma, Ruthie (3) JohnE (6 mos.)



*Ruthie and John E - November 1953*

The fellowship with the other missionaries continued in the form of coffee parties, shared meals, shopping trips, Bible studies and prayer meetings, occasional English movies, even trips to Haneda Airport for ice-cream and other American style food! They sometimes had overnight guests when missionaries from outside of Tokyo came in for mission business or medical reasons, or just to visit.

On the fifteenth of June, Lars and Selma attended the monthly Clergy Club dinner at Chapel Center with several of the other missionaries. It was announced at that meeting that there was a cabin and lot available at Lake Nojiri where Olaf and Eleanor Hansen already had a cabin. Lars and Douglas Swendseid were interested, so they took a train that night to go and see it. As soon as they saw the view of the lake and mountains as they approached the area, they knew that this was the place for their summer vacations. Four days later, Mr. Okano, the Japanese owner of the property came to talk to Lars and Doug about it, so with Kaji-san as the interpreter, they started negotiations. They made one more trip to Nojiri, and on June 22, Mr. Okano came to Tokyo again, and the deal was settled. The two families now had a lot and a summer cabin. The second cabin would be built later. The purchase price was approximately \$2000.

The mission's summer conference was held in Tokyo from July 6-10, 1953. The sessions were held in Maruyama Cho church and missionaries from out of Tokyo stayed with those who lived in the city. Meals were usually pot-luck in various homes, and sometimes eaten out. Often at those gatherings, a favorite place to eat was at the Chinese restaurant, *The Forbidden City*.

At the Tuesday evening service of that conference, July 7, Lars baptized John Eric with Olaf and Eleanor Hansen as sponsors. After the service, they all went to the Hansen's house to celebrate the occasion over refreshments.

In July, they started packing for their move out of Tokyo. Lars had been working with contractors to get a building started on the property that had been purchased by the mission in Hamamatsu. Since it would not be possible to have the house finished by September, the plan was to build a garage first, and they would live in that until the house was built. All of their household things were sent to Hamamatsu by truck. The family left on July 17 for Karuizawa where they spent the summer in language study and vacationing. They shared a house with Paul and June Arnold, and their little girl, Nancy, and had many enjoyable experiences together.

Again they had a lot of visits from other missionaries—some who came to attend a missionary conference held in Karuizawa every summer. Bernice Boyum stayed with them several days. In August, they made a trip to Lake Nojiri one week-end to visit the Hansens and Luttios, and to get an idea of what their summer place would be like.

Lars and Paul made a trip to Tokyo also—to attend a Youth for Christ Congress. They went on to climb Mt. Fuji again—they had gotten into condition for this climb by all the climbing they did in Karuizawa. Their cabin was on the side of a mountain and Lars and Paul made the trip from the village to their cabin several times a day—either walking or by bicycle.

Lars had to make a couple of other trips to Tokyo and Hamamatsu with regard to the garage that was supposed to get built. They were to live in this garage until a house could

be built for them. Progress was slow, and they had to stay in Karuizawa until September 19. They continued with language study while they waited. Finally, they went to Tokyo and stayed with Swendseids for three days. During that time, they attended the dedication of the new church at Maruyama Cho, had doctors' appointments, met with the architect, and met the new missionaries who had come the end of August. (Gilbertsons, Klemesruds, Vorlands, Sorensons, Jean Wang, Bowmans) There was also a washing machine to repair, so Lars' "second calling" was keeping him busy also.

On September 22, they finally arrived in Hamamatsu, and stayed with the Johnsruds until their garage was ready to be occupied. Two days after arriving, they experienced their first typhoon.

Big trees went down, and Johnsrud's bicycle shed went over, so Lars had a chance to do another repair job. Another first—Selma had a permanent in a Japanese beauty parlor—cost ¥500 (\$1.38) One afternoon, they took Ruthie and JohnE to the zoo. Selma wrote: "We looked at the animals and the people looked at us!" Foreigners were still a novelty in this city.

After several delays, the garage was ready for them to move into on October 20. Their maid, Reiko-san left on November 1, which made it necessary for them to visit the employment bureau to try to get some help. When they were told that there were a thousand people waiting for maids, they weren't very hopeful of getting help soon. The next day, after their weekly prayer meeting with the Johnsruds and Anna Gulick, an older lady came to the door and said that she wanted to work for them. Her name was Shibata-san, the wife of one of the workers at the City Office, and she had heard from her husband about this American family who needed help. She was their answer to prayer, and became a part of the family for many years.



*Garage home in Hamamatsu*

They sent out a form letter early in November telling about their new home, and the beginning of their new work:

Two evenings a week now I go out by train and bus to hold services Friday night in Chibata and Saturday night in Mikkabi. Next week we have arranged to begin also in Tsutsuki. These are small towns or *muras* where farmers live. They work every day of the week, unless it rains, so our meetings have to be held after dark. We use the town hall in Chibata and they ring the town bell so we have had the hall filled to overflowing every time. I take my tape-recorder and projector each time. They are heavy so I hope the mobile unit comes soon. I play hymns and sacred music on the recorder and show films. I have started preaching in Japanese and a week ago my interpreter became ill so I had to conduct the entire meeting in both places without a person around who understood English. They said they understood my Japanese but I think they just said that so I wouldn't feel badly about it.

One of the people who is helping us get started in the rural evangelism to which we have been assigned is Kawai-san. He is about eighty years old, a graduate of Stanford University, 1906. He is a Christian, lost all his goods during the war, heard the Lutheran Hour programs on the radio and contacted Pastor Johnsrud of our church here in Hamamatsu. He wanted a missionary to come to preach the gospel in his area. He is my interpreter, teacher and friend.

We have been living in our garage for about a month while we wait for our house to be built. We are getting along quite well in our "doll house." We have a small second floor which is large enough for a double bed, army cot and crib so we can all sleep up there. Half of the ground floor has a wood flooring over concrete and is used for our living room and study. The other half is just concrete and is the kitchen and laundry. (Lars has rigged up a tank under which we place a kerosene heater to heat water for laundry and baths. It looks like the water tower found in most American small towns. A fitting inscription would be: "Ingulsville; pop. 4; cap. 2 gals & 2 boys.")

Our children are well and growing larger and stronger. Ruthie is three years old and JohnE is five and a half months. They surely contribute their share in keeping our home a lively, happy place.

The work in the Hamana Lagoon area was going well—there was good response to the invitations to the meetings and Bible classes. Most of those who came were students, and at one point, Lars threatened to stop coming if they didn't bring their parents. His threat didn't seem to change the situation. Since Lars' Sunday schedule was usually very long—going to more than one place—Selma and the children did not go with him. Rather, they worshiped at the church that Leroy Johnsrud served, not far from where they lived. However, at Christmas time, or other special occasions, they did accompany Lars. The attendance at the Christmas meetings was especially good as Christmas had become a popular "festival" in Japan. Their interest in the festival brought many Japanese to hear the gospel message. The study of the Japanese language was a never-ending task, and Fujita-san became Lars' tutor and Muramatsu-san tutored Selma.



*Bible Camp at the beach—Hamana Ko churches*





## 12. *New House, A Partner in Mission*

The January, 1954 Mission Conference was held at the Student Center in Tokyo. Lars and Selma, Ruthie and JohnE stayed at the home of their former tutor, Kaji-san. They slept on *futons*, of course, but had brought their own electric blanket as they knew that Japanese homes were not heated. They found that the electric blanket wasn't quite wide enough to cover the four of them, so they woke up frequently feeling cold. In the morning, they had to dress in an unheated room, but no complaining. Selma remarked, "It is cold getting dressed with no heat, but the Japanese do it all the time so we can stand it for a week." They went to the Gilbertson's apartment every morning for breakfast and finally were able to borrow extra blankets from them, so finished the week in comfort. They had even decided that sleeping on *futons* was good for their backs. In spite of the hardships of traveling with small children to and from the conference sessions, spending a week at the conference was great because they had a chance to visit with all their friends, and made new friends amongst the recently arrived missionaries. They became a closely knit mission family.

A decision made at that conference made life a bit easier for the Ingulsruds as they were assigned a car—a black Chevrolet sedan. This meant that Lars didn't have to carry all his equipment when he went to the villages for meetings, and he was able to get home earlier in the evenings. However, he was now on the Building Committee which meant more days taken up with meetings. Monday was the missionaries' day off so one of those Mondays each month was designated as Missionary Fellowship. The missionaries stationed between Nagoya and Numazu took turns hosting these meetings in their homes. Selma especially enjoyed going to these gatherings as it gave her a chance to see many of her friends. With two small children, she wasn't able to get out as much as Lars did. They did appreciate having the Johnsruds living close by and the two families had many good times together. Lars and Selma were the sponsors at Peter Johnsrud's baptism, and often cared for him when his parents needed to be away. Anna Gulick also lived close by and visited often. Besides caring for the children and studying Japanese, Selma also studied a Bible course from the Lutheran Bible Institute. Even though she did all of the correspondence, she also continued with her creative writing, and had a few articles published in the Missionary magazine.

By April, 1954, Lars was holding a Bible class and evangelistic meeting in each of four towns in the area. They had invitations to begin work in four more; they weren't able to take on that much but the challenge was great:

There are over 90 towns in the area assigned to us where there is no witness of the resurrected Christ, and we think we could go into any of them. We don't know how long we will have this opportunity but we have it now, and we feel that we must do all we can in the power of God to reach as many as possible.

Construction on their new house began in February, and they were very happy to move out of the garage into this new house on July 5, 1954. Their moving was interrupted by having to go to Shizuoka for the mission's summer conference July 5-9. This time the conference was held at the Bible School, and most of the missionaries stayed in the dormitories of the school. Selma went only one day—the day it was her turn to help cook the meals. She didn't find that task burdensome because it gave her a chance to spend time with her friends again.



*New House at Kamiikegawa Cho, Hamamatsu City*

At the same time, their cabin was being built at Lake Nojiri, so at the end of July, they traveled by train and spent a month at the lake, away from the oppressing heat on the plains. Lars came back every other week-end to carry on with the Bible studies and meetings that he had started. Near the end of August, they made a trip to Tokyo from the lake with some of the other missionaries to meet the new group of missionaries who came in on the *President Cleveland*. (Aaslands, Eimons, Neumans, Bessie Salter, Evelyn Tuff, and Grace Nelson. The Unseths arrived later by plane.) They had thought that the mobile unit that Lars was waiting for might be on that ship, but it had been delayed. They enjoyed the rest of the month at the lake with many mission-family activities, such as going in a big boat to the Nojiri-ko Hotel for *sukiyaki*, having a picnic on the island, a coffee party for everyone at Swendseid's cabin put on by Mavis (Solveig) and Selma, and the many other visits with friends at the beach or over a cup of coffee. A couple of days before they left Nojiri, Lars and Doug heard about a motor-boat for sale, and for \$300 they decided that it was a real bargain, so bought it. That joint venture was the beginning of many summers of fun on the water. When they left to go back to Hamamatsu, Lars hauled their baggage to Kashiwabara, the nearest train station, in the rear cart that he pulled behind a bicycle. He often used this rear cart to haul the family various places.

Lars and Selma enjoyed their children very much, but since Lars' work was quite a distance from their home, Selma spent a lot of time alone with the children. Ruthie was making friends in the neighborhood and learning Japanese faster than her parents. One day she had invited some of her Japanese friends in to see the new house—in their excitement, they ran through the house, jumping on the beds, and there was bedlam! Selma had to send them home, and Ruthie was reprimanded—with a spanking. There

were times when Selma had anxious days or nights when the children were sick with the fevers, colds and infections that children often have. They were far from English speaking doctors, so they relied on local doctors, but communicating was always a problem. JohnE had a persistent skin rash on his face and hands for which there were many trips to the doctor. One time at another missionary home, he pulled a cup of coffee off the table and got a very serious burn on his arm—he cried for over two hours. Shibata-san was the one who took them to a doctor and on one of those days, she took JohnE to a skin doctor (for the burn), to a stomach doctor, and to an eye doctor (for an infection). The children sometimes had to take the cure for pin-worms which were quite prevalent at that time. They were generally healthy, however, and time went quickly for them all.

Ruthie started Japanese kindergarten just after she had her fourth birthday. She went to a Christian kindergarten recommended to them by the Carricks, Presbyterian missionaries who also lived in Hamamatsu. The two families became friends and the children often played together. Ruthie adjusted to kindergarten very quickly and was always happy to go each day. However, there were times when she felt the difference between herself and her friends. At the graduation the following March, she was quite self-conscious and told her mother that she either wanted to return to America or live completely like the Japanese. Selma made a special effort to have her play with her American friends as often as possible, sometimes having her go with Lars when he had a committee meeting at another missionary home. She and her Japanese neighbor, Sawako Chan did become very close friends, a friendship that continued for many years.

There were several other missionaries in Hamamatsu and soon they were meeting monthly for fellowship and prayer. This group also became a very important and enjoyable part of Lars and Selma's life in Hamamatsu. The US Air Force had a base near Hamamatsu, and soon they got to know a lot of fellow-Americans there. They even had international ball-games, with a team of Americans playing against the Japanese—people from the churches which Lars had started.

In the fall of 1954, Lars and Selma went to their first All-Lutheran Conference, a gathering of missionaries from all the different Lutheran synods, including those from Europe. The conference was in a Japanese hotel by a river in Gifu, a city north-west of Nagoya. Since space was limited, all the men slept in one large room, and all the women in another—on *futons*. The conference was a very enriching experience with interesting speakers and a chance to meet many new friends.

The long-awaited mobile unit finally arrived in Yokohama the end of October, and on the second of December, Lars drove it to Hamamatsu. The equipment hadn't cleared customs yet, so he had room to bring a kitchen stove from Tokyo. Selma was over-joyed, and started baking in it the very next day. She was especially appreciative of having it in time to do baking for Christmas. There were many guests who came at various times—including one evening when they invited people from the neighborhood to come. They showed slides and told the Christmas story.

Lars had many opportunities to share the message of Christmas in the various villages where he was having regular meetings and classes. At one of these, he had Ruthie tell the story in Japanese as he put figures on a flannel graph. As she got a little older, she sometimes interpreted for her dad. When Dr. Burgess visited them in the summer of 1955, he made a home-movie of Ruthie interpreting a *kamishibai* (picture story) as Lars told the story. One week before Christmas in 1954, Lars had the first baptisms since he had started work in that area. It was truly a day of rejoicing. On Christmas Eve, they invited these new Christians to their home and shared Christmas dinner with them. Six people were baptized, one of them being Makoto Nakashima.

Sometime during this first or second year, Nakashima *Sensei* became an important part of the work around the Hamana Lagoon. Lars was all set up for a meeting one evening,

and the hall that they were using was filled with people. Shortly before the meeting was to start, a student came and told him that Kawai-san, his interpreter, was ill and would not be able to come. Lars felt helpless and complained to the Lord:

"Now what do I do? You've called me out here, and all these people are here ready to listen, and I can't even speak enough Japanese to explain to them why we can't have a meeting. So what am I to do?"



*Kawai-san and Nakashima Sensei—Hamana Lagoon, 1955*

He had barely finished this prayer when a man walked up to him and said, "My name is Nakashima. I'm an English teacher at the high-school here, and if there's anything I can do to help you, let me know."

He interpreted for Lars that night, and after the meeting, he said:

"I interpreted your words, but I don't understand your message. So please explain to me what it means." They talked late into the night.

That was the beginning of his instruction in the Christian faith. He continued interpreting at many of the meetings and before long, he believed the message that he had been helping to deliver, and was baptized, acknowledging Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. He was very busy with his teaching job and helping in the evangelism program for that area.

Gradually, he began to feel that he should stop teaching and work with Lars full-time, then go to Seminary and become a pastor. When he told Lars about his feelings, Lars discouraged him and told him to stay in his teaching job. "We need Christians to witness in their place of work."

This went on for some time—Nakashima Sensei saying that he thought he should go to Seminary, and Lars telling him to stay where he was and witness there. Finally, one day Nakashima Sensei came and told Lars that he had handed in his resignation and he was going to enroll at the Seminary. Lars knew then that the call must be real and from then on supported him in his decision. His wife had become interested in Christianity when she saw the change in her husband. "He had been a good husband before he became a Christian, but became even better."

Nakashima Sensei taught part-time at the Bible School in Shizuoka, helping the Hylands and Anna Marie Mitchell, and started his studies at the Seminary. After his ordination, he became pastor of the church in Hamamatsu, and served as District President of the Tokai District of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church for some years. Thus Lars had the experience of working under the leadership of the man who had stepped forward that night long before and offered his help. He was truly a partner in mission. They remained very close friends during all the years that Lars worked in Japan.



*Nakashima Sensei and wife Akiko, Akira and Yuko*



*Church group at Mikkabi, with Nakashima Sensei and Kawai-san, 1956.*



## 13. *The Gospel Truck*

The year 1955 started out with Lars going to the mission conference at the Bible School in Shizuoka. They had made arrangements for one of the deaconesses from a German mission to come and stay with Selma while Lars was at Conference because a new baby was due later in January. Selma had a new maid, Kimiko-san working for her, and when Kimiko-san was not able to work, Shibata-san would always come and fill in. Some days they both helped, especially when Selma left for Tokyo to await the baby's arrival. Lars took Selma to Tokyo on January 10 and left her at Sanoden's. While she waited, she had opportunities to visit with many of her friends so the time passed rather quickly. She went in to the Seventh Day Adventist hospital a week later, in the same room that she had been in when JohnE was born. The next morning, January 18, Lars came back to Tokyo. He had other business to attend to, but arrived back at the hospital an hour before Faith Elaine was born at 8:13 p.m. She was very small—only 5 pounds, 10 ounces. They thought she was “mighty wonderful.” Selma didn't sleep much that night because she was so excited and happy. Lars had to return to Hamamatsu and Selma was in the hospital until the following Monday when he came to take her home. First of all, he had to go to the American Embassy to register the birth of this new American citizen. (Later she had to be registered at the Shizuoka Ken office.) After they arrived home by train the next day, they learned that Kimiko-san, their maid who had been off for a few days, was not coming back. Faithful Shibata-san was there to help care for the other children. The Johnsruds brought dinner the next day, and also vacuumed the house and Lars went directly to the Employment Bureau to see about getting a new maid. The very next day, Ota-san, a widow came and started work. However, after five weeks, she told them she wanted to quit because she didn't like working for foreigners. They were able to get a high school student who worked after school, and Shibata-san continued to help during the day as needed.

Faith Elaine was baptized on February 20 at the English service that Leroy Johnsrud had been conducting in the Hamamatsu church for the people at the military base. Lars baptized her and Leroy and Carolyn Johnsrud were the sponsors. After the service, the eighteen people who were at the service came to the house for tea and cookies.



*Faith's first summer at Lake Nojiri, 1955*

Lars was gratified to see good response to the gospel that they were proclaiming in more and more places. In April, 1955, he started an instruction class at Washizu with nine people attending. They were limited with the material they had to work with, and he had to mimeograph portions of the catechism for each lesson. Nakashimas had moved to Hamamatsu that spring, so it was easier to coordinate their work. Selma also enjoyed having Mrs. Nakashima close by. They visited often, sometimes over the sewing that Mrs. Nakashima did for Selma and the children.

The mobile unit that was assigned to Lars became an important part of their lives and work. He was holding meetings in five rural villages each week, and frequently assisted missionaries in other towns during special evangelistic services. Friends in the United States had written and asked if they had a church. In their Christmas letter of 1955, Selma responded that this truck was their "church"—instead of a steeple, there were four loud speakers mounted on top through which recorded hymns were played and invitations extended to attend the meetings being held in the area. The verse from John 8:12 "*I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*" was painted in Japanese on the outside and Selma added, "It would be interesting to know the number of people who read that verse every day as the truck makes its rounds."

Lars wrote this story about the mobile unit for *The Missionary*:

#### I AM A GOSPEL TRUCK

I am a 1953 one-ton Chevrolet Panel truck, serial no. 153J-015111. I was bought by the Young People's Luther League and dedicated for foreign mission work in Japan at the 1953 International Luther League Convention in Moorhead, Minnesota. I didn't know anything about either Japan or foreign mission work, but they made quite a fuss over me and so I supposed the job must be important. I couldn't help wondering though, why I was picked for the job. I'm no different than any other Chevy Panel truck, only my serial and engine numbers are different, and that's not



*Lars telling a gospel story by "Kamishibai" from the back of the Gospel*



much of a difference. So I just went along with everything and tried to do what was expected of me.

They mounted a big 3500 watt Onan Light plant in me, right behind the driver's seat. Then they put in a big panel of electronic equipment, tape recorder, amplifiers and record player. They put in a 16 mm. movie projector, a big slide and film strip projector, four big loud speakers, a big outdoor movie screen and a lot of little odds and ends. Then I was given a new coat of paint. They painted Luther's Coat of Arms on each side door, and a big cross on the side, and printed the words, "Lutheran Mobile Unit for Japan, a gift to Christian Missions by the International Luther League," on the sides. When everything was installed and the paint was dry, I was driven off to San Francisco and put on a big ship bound for Japan.

In November, 1954, I arrived in Yokohama, Japan. It had been a rough trip and I was a little beat up. Missionary Lars Ingulsrud, assigned to use me for rural evangelism in the Hamana Lagoon district, came to see me and to try to get me admitted into Japan. He walked around me, and noted the dents in my fenders and sides. Then he opened the door and gasped. Parts of the equipment installed were lying all over the floor. I had been given some pretty rough treatment and things had kind of shaken apart. I overheard Lars (I'll call him that from now on because we are old friends and don't stand on formalities) say to one of his friends that it looked like he had some work cut out for him.

It took Lars over three months to get me admitted into Japan. He had an awful time. They only allowed two trucks to be imported into the country that year and I was one of them. There haven't been any admitted since so I have that distinction, too. I guess they had to pay over a thousand dollars import duty on me and that on top of the \$1200 it cost to send me across the ocean made me a pretty expensive Chevy Panel truck. Lars gave me a kick and said, "For that money we could have had a Mercury or a Dodge or a G.M.C." I felt kind of bad for awhile, but found that he just gripes like that sometimes.

He sorted out the parts that were loose and put them in boxes, filled up my tank with gasoline, and off we went across the mountains. I soon found that you don't move very far in Japan before you run into mountains. I didn't have any load on so we buzzed along down the Tokaido Highway that runs from Tokyo to Kobe. We went through Hakone, a resort by a beautiful lake on top of the mountains between Tokyo and Numazu. It was breakfast time then. We had gotten an early start, and Lars stopped for some bread and ate as he drove along.

The stretch from Hakone to Numazu I will never forget. It was my introduction to really bad roads. We didn't average five miles per hour, and I don't think we stopped once. We just moved along, down hill all the way, but there were great holes with sharp edges and there were soft shoulders. We saw two big trucks on that stretch that had gone over the edge that morning, swinging out to avoid holes. I found out then that Lars puts safety first. He went through the Army Truck Driving School during the war and I guess they were able to teach him that much anyway. One day, I heard him tell one of the other missionaries about a newspaper article he had read. Seems that in this article the writer was complaining about the condition of the Tokaido Highway and said that

to say the road is "bad" is to make a studied attempt at understatement. I thought that was pretty good.

The road from Numazu to Fuji to Shizuoka was not so bad and as there are missionaries from our mission in each of these places, Lars tried to find their houses to show me off. But he got lost in Fuji and finally had to give up and go on. We have since then spent a week in Fuji helping the Olsons with special evangelistic meeting and every day we drove up and down every street and avenue making announcements, passing out tracts, and inviting people to attend. We won't get lost there anymore.

From Shizuoka to Shimada, the road was bad. Lars ate lunch in Shimada with the Davidsons and Miss Holte. Then on through Kakegawa, where Vorlands are now, across the big spreading Tenryu River bridge. About 3:30 we rolled into Hamamatsu. It had taken about ten hours to drive one hundred and sixty miles.

The Customs Officials had taken all the instruction books and service manuals out of me in Yokohama, I guess. Anyway, Lars couldn't find them and no one knew anything about them, so he started trying to put things in place. Soon the generator was serviced and running. The tape recorder and amplifiers were working and the projectors tested. He couldn't find all the parts for the record player, though, so he took that out and it's in a box in the garage. He looks at it once in awhile with that "I'll have to get that thing together some day" look, but he hasn't found time yet.

The Ingulsruds had been living in the big 12 x 24 concrete garage that was built for me, so I was glad they had been able to move into their new house before I arrived.

Lars started using me right away and we would go out to the villages where he had meetings. He would put the speakers on top of me and start the generator. Then he would drive around announcing the time and place of the meeting. After that I didn't do much, just stood by the hall or meeting place and listened to the generator roar away sending electrical power through the long heavy wire that ran from me into the building. When it was all over, lots of people would come and stand around looking at me and remarking on the superior quality of American trucks. This would inflate my ego, but when Lars heard them say things like that he would always tell them it isn't true, and that during the war in Korea the soldiers found that the Japanese trucks were just as good or better than American-built ones. I don't know about that but sometimes when I am doing my best to stay in one piece on a rough road, and trying not to shake all the equipment apart, and the locally built trucks go past me traveling about twice my speed, I begin to wonder. Of course, they don't have to be as careful as we do.

I have found out what Japan is like now and I have also found out why they made such a fuss about me before I came. I have an important job. By using me, Lars can go to many more places than he could before, and he can attract big crowds of people because he has me and the equipment I carry. It's all because he has something to tell the people here that they haven't heard before. It's good news, he says, and he is always anxious to tell it to more and more people.

Sometimes I dream about the life I could have had, being a delivery truck for some business or store in a big city in America, with smooth streets to drive on, good gasoline that's clean to drink, and get a new part that fits whenever something wears out. But then when I see hundreds of people come to a meeting to hear the Good News; or when ten to fifteen happy young Christians climb in the back and we go around through the villages singing of peace and joy, with the amplifier on so that the beautiful music can be heard in every home, like we do at Christmas time; or when I am used to carry some poor sick person to the hospital, then I wouldn't trade my position with any truck in the world.



*Grandpa and Grandma Beil visiting in Japan, Summer 1955*

Language study continued to be a real burden for Lars—he felt that he was learning more from living and working with the Japanese people. As a result, his language was far from “polished,” but he was able to communicate, and had good rapport with the people. The mission did have requirements with regard to language study, however, so he had to continue. He had his last required language examination in June, 1955. Selma also continued studying, and her tutor at this time was Toshiko Yamamoto who also helped with the house-work. She was one of the young students in the first group to be baptized. She went with them to the lake that summer, and continued tutoring and helping until she left for the Bible School in the fall.

A highlight for the family that summer was the visit of Selma's parents, Dr. & Mrs. Beil. They arrived the end of June, and Lars and Selma and the children all went to Tokyo to meet them. They were impressed with the beautiful new airport terminal at Haneda. They stayed at Swendseid's for two nights, then used the opportunity to go to the Seventh Day Adventist hospital to see the doctor. Faith needed her shots—and got an extra shot of penicillin as she had tonsillitis. Ruthie had broken out with something a couple of days before, but the doctor in Hamamatsu thought it was only heat blisters. However, Dr. Cyphers diagnosed it as chicken-pox. Fortunately, she didn't seem sick and they all returned to Hamamatsu on July 1. They all enjoyed having Grandpa and Grandma there—and it was a special treat for the grand-parents to get to know their grand-children. Dr. Beil often accompanied Lars when he went to his meetings, and was able to get a close-up view of the work.

The first week in July was Mission Conference at the Bible School in Shizuoka so Lars had to leave on Monday morning. Selma, Faith, and the Beils went for only two days in

the middle of the week. Dr. Beil spoke to the group one evening. Dr. Winther—the oldest Lutheran missionary in Japan had the Bible studies at the conference.

By the end of July they were all ready to go to Lake Nojiri. Lars and Selma and children went first to get somewhat settled. The Beils had made a trip to Kyushu, and came a few days later. With a maid and guests, they needed a bigger cabin, so they had another small room built on—the maid's room. Since July 31 was Lars and Selma's sixth wedding anniversary, they celebrated by taking the children and Beils to the Nojiri-ko Hotel for a *sukiyaki* dinner. They traveled across the lake by hired boat. They had also bought some living room furniture—wicker chairs and table as part of their anniversary celebration. Gradually, the cabin was becoming more livable, and the summer was very enjoyable. During the middle of August, they attended the "All-Lutheran Study Series"—a series of four meetings for all the Lutheran missionaries vacationing there. Usually over one hundred were in attendance. Dr. Beil was the speaker during this series and the missionaries appreciated having these messages from someone "fresh" from the United States. The meetings were held in Sherer's cabin, on Johnsrud's lawn, and at Aske's cabin (breakfast meeting). One meeting was held in the auditorium when non-Lutheran missionaries were invited.

Another significant "beginning" that summer was meeting the new neighbors, the Mikunis who had built a cabin just below the Ingulsrud's. Lars and Selma had invited them over one afternoon, and later the Mikunis reciprocated with an invitation to their cabin for tea. Thus began a friendship that continued for many years.

Lars and Doug began getting interested in water skiing that summer, too. Since they had a motor boat, they started working on getting a surf-board and skis. Lars was spending more and more time with the boat and other activities at the lake, and the golf clubs that he had were being used less and less. He came to the realization that the only reason he climbed the hill to go golfing was because he had the clubs, so he sold them—and never regretted it. That summer, he also swam across the lake—a feat repeated many times as he accompanied the children when they went for their "island" or "village" badges in the swimming program.

On August 26, they closed up their cabin for another year and took the train to Tokyo. The Beils had left a few days before to visit some of the United Lutheran Church missionaries whom they had been meeting while in Japan. On August 27, Lars and Selma and the children went with them to Haneda airport and said their farewells. Knowing that they wouldn't see each other again for three years, it was not easy to say "Good-bye." After a couple more days in Tokyo, their vacation was over, and they returned to Hamamatsu.

Again in the summer of 1955 four new missionaries arrived. There were no couples this time, but four single ladies joined the mission family: Dorothy Bonnallie, Lenore Robertsdahl, Wanda Anderson, and Wenona Strandlie.

In September, Stan and Selma Klemesrud moved to Hamamatsu—to join the Johnsruds, and the Ingulsruds. No wonder the Japanese were confused and wondered who all these '*surudo*' people were! Another person that they met in the fall also became a very helpful friend for many years—Dr. Kaku. Not only was he a good doctor, but he could also speak English, and had studied in the United States. His clinic and home were not far from Lars and Selma's house which proved to be very convenient many times.

Since Toshiko-san had gone to Bible School, they had to find another maid—Selma was beginning to tire of training maids as each one had to be taught how to do the tasks in an American home. Chizeru-san was also a student who worked after school, and Shibata-san continued to help at other times. October 16 was the tenth anniversary of Selma's surgery, and if her doctors' could have seen how much she accomplished each day, besides having had three babies and taking care of them, they would have been very

pleased. She did a lot of canning of vegetables and fruits as there were no freezers at that time. And there were always a lot of visitors—missionaries and Japanese—and often some stayed overnight. In their Christmas letter of 1955, Selma wrote:

We five are in “good shape” and are finding daily satisfaction and joy in our work in Japan....I now have two Bible classes at our home each week. One is for middle school pupils and the other is for university students. Both groups came requesting English classes and consented to study the Bible.

The children are well and very active. Ruthie is still attending Japanese kindergarten as well as studying the Calvert Home Study Kindergarten course. JohnE keeps things lively for us and seems to have a constant flow of conversation, either Japanese or English, depending upon the nationality of his hearers. Faith took her first steps the week before she was nine months old and now walks unassisted when and where she pleases—usually into mischief!

Christmas day that year was very special. For some time, Lars had been visiting Ito-san in a hospital in Hamamatsu—he had brought him in from a small village to this hospital where he was being treated for tuberculosis. After a long spiritual search while studying other religions, Ito-san had come to believe in Christ. He and his wife were baptized on Christmas Day—in the hospital. In the afternoon, all those who had been attending the meetings in the various villages met at a room in a resort hotel for the Christmas worship. At that service three more were baptized, a sixty-three year old merchant, a twenty-one year old farmer, and a high school student.

With such a full schedule on Christmas Day—after an equally busy Christmas Eve, they had their family Christmas on December 26. Having a delayed family Christmas became a common occurrence in the years to come. They had time to relax after Christmas as there were no classes or meetings.

The week before New Year’s Day is very busy for the Japanese so the missionaries had some leisure time. They were able to do some of the things that busy schedules prevented them from doing during regular work weeks. Going to the mountains where there were ski slopes was one of the favorite winter fun things to do. That year, Lars and Ruthie went with the Tangs to try out their skis on the slopes of Akakura—near Lake Nojiri.



*Baptismal service at a house-meeting in one of the villages*



## 14. *Adding to the Kingdom*

**A**s is typical in any mission situation, the longer one works in an area, the busier one becomes. More contacts are made, and more opportunities present themselves. Lars and Selma found this to be very true as their lives became more and more involved in the task of witnessing for their Lord. In their April 1956 form letter to supporters in the US, they wrote:

God has, in His love and goodness, given us the joy of seeing a few precious souls won for His kingdom. Easter arrived this year, cold and rainy and muddy as could be. But it did not dampen our spirits for this was a day of rejoicing. Ten persons were received by God by adoption through baptism. First, Nakashima Sensei's (our evangelist) wife and two children. This gives us our first Christian family. Then three young women and four young men. We are more than thankful that God has permitted us to see fruit from our labor. Two of the young men and one of the ladies is from a village called Oya, near Tsuzuki, and they now want us to hold meetings in their village. So next month we will begin work there. Another of the young men is from a village called Osaki and he has made arrangements to hold meetings in his village too. So we are slowly spreading out and we are using the mobile unit more and more.

Ruthie was "graduated" from Japanese kindergarten last month. The other members of her class have now entered first grade since the school year in Japan begins in April. She and the other children received real diplomas, tied with red ribbon. It is a genuine keepsake of her 18 months in a Japanese kindergarten. JohnE and Faith, our small fry, keep things very lively here. When they aren't quarreling over the same toy, they are great pals. Faith is just beginning to say her first words and it thrills us all.

I still have my weekly English Bible classes for students. Last week, I started a new class for women. Some of the kindergarten mothers asked me to begin a class teaching American cooking. Now I have a young lady to help me who has graduated from our Bible School. She conducts a Bible study and devotional period, and I try to teach some simple cooking.

Later on that year, they had more baptisms and more rejoicing. In the village of Ochiba where Lars had been having regular meetings, five people were baptized in July, and a week later in Washizu, another meeting place, four were baptized. At the end of that year, Lars wrote in their Christmas letter:

This year has been a busy one. With meetings regularly held in seven villages now, and three or four other villages occasionally, it has become impossible to carry on without the help of the Christians. They have taken over much of the work, arranging for the meeting hall, advertising, leading meetings, and witnessing to the people in their village of the salvation that is found only in Jesus. We thank God for the way in which the Christians in our small congregations have been letting their lights shine.

In addition to his work in the rural areas, Lars had become the auxiliary chaplain for the American personnel stationed at the Air Base in Hamamatsu. He conducted a worship service there on Sunday mornings before going out to the villages, and had a midweek Bible Study for them. Selma had been attending these services before Lars became the chaplain, and she was also a member of the Ladies' Club that met regularly. They enjoyed these contacts with American service people, and were often guests in each other's homes.

Selma's schedule, too, had been getting busier. She continued studying Japanese with a tutor, and had her classes to prepare for and teach, besides teaching Ruthie. There was always baking to do to be prepared for the guests who came. Without the help of the maids, it would have been difficult for her to handle it all. Since she had such trustworthy help to take care of the children, she was free to teach, or to go to visit friends, or shop without having to take all three of the children with her. When JohnE and Faith were babies, she usually left them with the maid when she went to church at the air base or the nearby Lutheran church—until they were old enough to sit fairly still in church. One Sunday when there was no maid to stay with her, Faith went along with the other two children, but Selma had forgotten to take her "*ni-ni*" (pacifier) along, so she had made her presence known! With their blond or red hair, they were usually noticed when they were out in public. An older lady once asked Selma if she had dyed JohnE's hair.

Traveling was sometimes a tiring experience on the crowded trains. In April 1956, when JohnE was not quite three years old, Selma had taken him and Ruthie to visit Davidsons in Shimada to see their newly adopted son, Paul. On the way home, the train was so crowded, the only space they could find to stand in was in the wash room. JohnE was so tired and as there was no place to sit, Selma put him on the shelf over the wash bowl and he slept there the rest of the way home. Traveling by train in those days was still very inexpensive, so the missionaries used this efficient way of getting around to their places of work, to committee meetings, or for fellowship with other missionaries.



*Shibata-san with Faith and Ruthie and Japanese friend in a Japanese garden.*

Not many Japanese people had been in American style homes, and they were interested in seeing how these foreigners lived. Mrs. Nakashima was a home-economics teacher at a High School, and asked Selma if she could bring her students to see their house. Selma readily agreed, but was a bit astounded at the number who came. Seventy-two students showed up with Mrs. Nakashima! They divided them into four groups and showed them through the house.

There was an open field area across the street from their house, and it was in such an area that "honey-well" open sewage pits were usually situated. Selma looked out the window one day



and saw that the children were playing rather close to the honey-well, and fearing what might happen, she hurried out to call to them to come away from the danger. Just then, her worst fears were realized and JohnE fell in. There was a young woman standing right there, so she pulled him out before Selma got there. Selma stripped him on the spot and carried him home and cleaned him up. When it was all over and JohnE had recovered, she thanked God for His loving care and protection. Later, she used this incident in describing God's love for us. He looks at us in our "filthy rags" but still loves us, take us in His arms and cleans us up.

Ruthie took it upon herself to make Mother's Day special for Selma. She took her own money and went to the store and bought *umeboshi* (pickled plum), a cucumber, cider and shampoo—and gave her mother these special gifts. Selma was very pleased.

All three of the children had measles in June that year—starting with Ruthie, then JohnE, and Faith last. JohnE was very sick with a high fever and rash, and Faith also was quite sick for two or three days. Because she was just recovering from the measles, she stayed with the maid when the rest of the family went to Shizuoka for the summer mission conference the first part of July. Lars came home early from the conference because of his meetings in the villages. Some of the earliest missionaries had left for their first furlough, so the number of missionaries at the conference was fewer. After Olaf Hansen, John Homerstad was now the superintendent.



*Annual Mission Conference at Shizuoka Bible School, January 1956*

BACK ROW: Norman Olson, Bo Sorenson, Hal Eimon. Phil Luttio, Ken Stenberg, Lars Ingulsrud, Paul Arnold, Norm Neuman, Oliver Bergh, Phil Hyland, Gehard Vorland & Bruce. SECOND ROW: Anna Marie Mitchell, Jean Wang, Evelyn Tuff, Roselyn Holte, Wenona Strandlie, Leroy Johnsrud, Gaylen Gilbertson, Russ Sanoden, Connie Aamodt, Dorothy Sorenson, Bertha Vorland, Wanda Anderson. THIRD ROW: Judith Bergh & Margaret, Ruth Davidson, Lenore Robertsdahl, Anna Gulick, Selma Klemesrud, Bessie Salter, Cleone Tang, VaVi Aamodt, Douglas Swendseid & Rachel, Selma Ingulsrud, Dalene Eimon, John Homerstad, Frances Homerstad & Deborah, Margaret Luttio, Froydis Myhrwold, June Arnold, Mrs. Berkedahl. SEATED ROW: Dorothy Bonnallie, Luella Unseth & Nathan, Judy Hyland & Ruthie, Lois Pederson, Grace Nelson & Rebecca Hyland, Alice Sanoden, Marian Hansen, Joan Neuman & Paul, Steve Luttio, Karen Luttio, Nancy Arnold. KNEELING: Harold Aasland, Richard Nelson & Paul Davidson, Trudy Homerstad, Cathy Vorland, Jimmy Neuman.

Lars had acquired a motor-cycle, and when he didn't need a lot of equipment with him, he found it easier to use that as his mode of transportation. He took Selma on it at times, but she wasn't too enthusiastic about it. After her second ride, she decided that it was too scary for her.

Lars was also traveling more and more to repair appliances and various items for other missionaries, continuing his "other calling." Whenever possible, Selma and the children went with him—one time to the Neumann's house in Shimada to fix their stove, then on to Fuji to do the same for the Aaslands. While he worked, Selma enjoyed visiting the wives, and the children played together. Monday was supposed to be the missionary's day off, and this was one way the family could spend the time together. At other times, Lars was able to do a repair job and take part in a Missionary Fellowship meeting on the same day.

Summer at Nojiri was enjoyable as usual. Lars took the family to the cabin on July 23, then he returned to Hamamatsu and worked until August 7. Selma had her maid with her to help with the care of the children and with the general chores. One part of life at Nojiri at that time that was quite a chore was cooking on a *konro*—sometimes it took awhile to get the charcoal burning just right. All the water had to be carried and that, too, became a big part of each day's work. Lars and Doug continued to work on their boat, and enjoyed skimming around the beautiful lake. They made a surf board which the Swendseid and Ingulsrud children enjoyed for many years. The children also took part in the various activities which were a part of NLA life.

It wasn't all play, however. The missionaries took advantage of almost everyone being in the same place so planned some committee meetings. That summer the Children's Education Committee met with concerned parents and discussed the plans for children's education. The main issue that summer was with regard to which school should be the designated school for our mission's children. As opinions were varied, some of the meetings became rather heated.

New missionaries who arrived the summer of 1956 were Eric and Miriam Peterson, Paul and Donna Vang, and Ivan and Polly Fagre. An "Open House" was held at Homerstad's cabin to welcome the new missionaries.

After they got back to Hamamatsu, they soon got back into their regular schedules. For about a month, the Carrick family, Presbyterian missionaries, stayed with them while they waited for their new house to be built. As the children got a little older, and more children were within traveling distance, there were more birthday parties to attend—very special events for all.

Selma's part of their Christmas letter showed how thankful she was for all the Lord's blessings through the year:

We are thankful that our Lord sees fit to use such blunt and unwieldy instruments such as we in the work of His Kingdom. Our prayer continues to be that He will make us more usable and make our precision keener that we will not clog the working of His Spirit through us. We are grateful for every contact and opportunity to witness to His children in Japan, and rejoice that we have been allowed to see fruit for our labor, that some have accepted Christ into their hearts. We can never forget to be thankful for the faithful Christians in the home-land who are praying for our work here.

We praise God for good health, for our home, for each other, for our children. Although they are young and inexperienced, the Lord has a place for them, too, on His staff. A few weeks ago, Ruthie, our six-year-old, began to have a real concern because her neighborhood playmates

did not know Jesus. So she invited them to come to our house on a Sunday afternoon and told them Bible stories. Later, I found her drinking Japanese soda pop and asked where she got the money to buy it. She replied that her friends brought a small offering... but she hastened to explain that she had shared the drink with them. She has a willing spirit but lacked the proper emphasis on stewardship. JohnE is three this year. He loves to sing hymns and follows the words and melody correctly most of the time, although he sometimes makes amusing mistakes, such as, "Lord got a hose" and "Jesus shall rain with the sun." Faith is twenty-two months and a great mischief maker. Sometimes we feel she is more Japanese than American in her words and actions but her blond, fine hair and blue eyes betray her ancestry.

I appreciated the pleasant experience of teaching Ruthie the Calvert Home Study First Grade Course. She is a willing and eager pupil and we both enjoy our class period each morning. I am also enjoying the three Bible classes that I am teaching this year.

Before the year was over, they had one more special blessing. Shibata-san was baptized at the Christmas service at the Hamamatsu church where she had been attending. She had become a part of the family, and now was even more so, and they were very thankful.

The very next day, a cablegram arrived from Lars' brother, Arnold, informing them of their father's sudden death. It came as quite a shock to them as they had received a letter from him just the day before. He had written fairly regularly to Lars and Selma and the last letter that they received from him was written on December 18—less than a week before he died. He had passed away on December 23, 1956 at the age of seventy-nine years. He had been quite active until the time of his death, in spite of having spent time in a sanitarium to be treated for tuberculosis at two different times. He wrote that he had been ill with the flu and had been in the hospital for a few days, but was getting better. He was looking forward to Maida and her family coming home for Christmas. They had arrived there on December 22 and the next day they were on their way to a relative's house for dinner, when he had a heart attack in the car. The funeral had been two days after Christmas so the cable that Lars sent to his mother did not reach her until after the funeral was over. They all took comfort in the assurance that "Pa" was now with the Lord, and they did not "grieve as those without hope."



## 15. *Growth...and Loss*

As Lars and Selma started their fourth year in the Hamana Lagoon area, the work schedule had settled into a pattern much the same as the previous year. They started the New Year by having twenty of the Christians from the villages to their house for the New Year's service and a *sukiyaki* dinner, followed by a time of playing games and fellowship. These times of getting together with other Christians was very important for these people who were still young in the faith, and didn't have any support in their families, or in their villages. It seems they often came to the missionary's home, whether as individuals or in groups. At those times, fortunately, Selma always had others who helped her. Having guests for meals or overnight so often kept her busy, but she was always happy to have them come.

The many friends that they had at the air base continued to provide them with an active social life. Besides the worship services and Bible studies that they had together, they also visited in each other's homes, played games —favorites were Going to Jerusalem, Scrabble and Monopoly. (They also used these games with Japanese guests.) The men even did some wild boar hunting. These Air Force friends were very helpful in many ways—sometimes providing them with food products that they could not procure on the Japanese market. When a fellow missionary, Selma Klemesrud became seriously ill, an emergency Air Force plane flew her to a hospital in Tokyo. During the year of 1957, the personnel at the air base gradually decreased as they were being sent back to the USA. Until July of that year, Ruthie and JohnE had gone to Sunday School at the base, but as the number of children decreased, that was discontinued. From then on, they went to Sunday School at the church at Oiwake Cho, where the Klemesruds now served.

The Mission conference was held the first part of January at the Bible School in Shizuoka again. Lars was elected to serve on the Executive Committee to finish out Alton Knutson's term as Vice Superintendent, which meant extra committee meetings. At that conference, Lars made a request that they be permitted to take a three-month furlough instead of their scheduled one-year furlough in 1958. His reasoning was that he felt it was important that they return to the work that they had started in the rural areas. Usually when a missionary left for furlough, another missionary was assigned to take his or her place. No action was taken at this conference as they told him that they would have to confer with Dr. Syrdal first. But they gave him as much assurance as they could that he would probably be able to return to his work, even after a one-year furlough.

The whole family made a very special trip to Tokyo in February. Selma's doctor from Johns Hopkins Hospital, Dr. Taussig, was in Tokyo on her way back to the United States after a trip to India. They went to Tokyo on Sunday evening, stayed at the Swendseid's, and on Monday morning went to the Imperial Hotel and met Dr. Taussig. Selma was thrilled to meet her and to introduce her to her three children—who very politely shook hands with the doctor. Selma wrote about the visit: "She talked to Lars about a half hour asking about conditions in Japan. Then she listened to my 'ticker' and said, 'It sounds

lovely, just lovely.' As we left, she shook hands all around again and gave me a big hug and kiss. It surely was a thrill to see her."

The children all had the mumps in April and May so some of their activities were curtailed for awhile. The Executive Committee was to meet at their house in May, and JohnE came down with the mumps the night before. He was kept in his room while the committee had the meals at the house, and they went to the church for their business sessions. It was a big disappointment to JohnE because he loved to have company.

Selma had to curtail some of her activities, too, due to her fourth pregnancy. Her doctor at the Air Base told her that she had to cut back because her energy level was approximately one-half of what it normally was. She gradually discontinued her classes, but not until summer. She had to rest more in the afternoons, something she had not been doing for a long time. Since there was a hospital at the Air Base in Nagoya, she started going to a doctor there.

Masako Yamamoto's first contact with the Ingulsrud family was on May 27, 1957. Being Toshiko-san's sister, she came to visit her when she was there on vacation, then met the family. She went to work for the Hylands, and later became a very important part of the Ingulsrud family.

Lars had been waiting for a long time to get the movies on *The Life of Christ* to use in his work. He went to Tokyo in July to try to get these movies through customs, but was not successful. They decided to return them to the US and have them sent to the Air Base in Hamamatsu. Since Lars was auxiliary chaplain there, he had APO privileges. They finally got the movies and Lars reported on how they were being used in their Christmas letter:

This year, we are able to present the Christmas story in a very vivid and meaningful way. We now have the Living Bible Series of movies on *The Life of Christ* in color and with Japanese sound. I wish you could be with us at our meetings these days. We are presenting the Christmas story early because others will want to use the films later on. The Spirit of God has been drawing many to the meetings and they have listened intently to this glorious message. Experience in presenting the audio-visual materials, and a Spirit-filled, dynamic, well-trained evangelist whom God has called to work with us, combined with the petition of thousands of prayer partners back in American, and the power of God Who has promised to back up His Word, unite to enable us to plant the seed and do it effectively. If you check the statistics for this year, you would say we have failed, or have had a poor year (only two baptisms)—but no! It has been a good year. We have been able to present the gospel better and to more people than ever before. God will give the harvest. When, is His problem.

One of the villages where we started work last year about this time, asked us to leave. They did not want Christianity. Last month, there was a village election and God wrought a miracle. The new head man has 'invited' us to come. He has been reading a Bible portion and doesn't understand it but wants to. We will, God willing, begin there soon. Ruthie, our seven year old will go along and help. She is very popular and helps to break down the natural fear of the foreigner.

They had decided that the cabin at Nojiri was a bit small as their family was growing. Lars had made arrangements with a builder at Nojiri to add an upstairs with three small bedrooms. Selma and Shibata-san were busy in July making curtains, bedspreads,

cushions, and *zabutons* for the cabin. They had collected other equipment for the cabin also, so sent all these extra things on ahead, and they went by train on August 5. They were pleased with the new arrangement and the extra rooms. Lars delighted in being able to enjoy the beautiful scenery in the morning—the lake and Mount Miyoko—without even lifting his head off his pillow. They had another enjoyable summer at the lake. It was a very significant summer as they and Swendseids were admitted into the Nojiri Lake Association. Up until that time, their lots were outside of the association. They were enjoying the water sports more and more, and Lars and Doug had a hydro-plane they played around with. At a mission picnic at the nearby YWCA camp, they gave rides on their surf-board to anyone who wanted to try it. Lars took off one day from the playing to go to Karuizawa for the Fellowship of Christian Missionaries conference. He went by train—a one day trip.

Since they would be on furlough the following summer, they made arrangements to rent the cabin to the Simeonsons, Swedish missionary friends. They also sold the two boats and a motor to “the boat men” at Nojiri-mura. They returned to Hamamatsu on September 4.

On the way home, Selma stopped off in Nagoya in order to have a check-up with her doctor at the Air Force Hospital where she would have her baby. The due date was September 30.

She stayed with the Gilbertsons and returned home the next day. On September 9, JohnE had his first day at the Japanese *yochien* and felt very proud as he left the house with his new apron on and a bag on his shoulder. Every morning thereafter he happily went off to this new experience in kindergarten.

Ruthie also started school the same day, studying second Grade in the Calvert course, with Selma as her teacher. She had several of her MK (Missionary Kids) friends help her celebrate her seventh birthday—Nancy Arnold, Margaret, Peter, Cynthia Johnsrud, and Ruthie Hyland. Their mothers came, too, and Selma enjoyed their visit.

Faith was the only one not in school, and she often told her mother that she would like to study—“recess.”

On September 14, Selma started having false labor, so on Monday, the 16th, Lars took her to Nagoya. When the doctor checked her, he said that he thought the baby would be born sometime that week. Lars left Selma at Gilbertson’s then went back to Hamamatsu. At one o’clock the next morning when Selma realized that she needed to go to the hospital, Gaylen Gilbertson took her there, and they sent a *denpo* (telegram) to Lars. He arrived at the hospital at 5 a.m., and at 11 a.m. Luke Alfred was born. He weighed only 5 pounds 4 ounces.

Selma wrote: “He is a precious little darling—another red-head! Lars seems pleased, too, and I know the children will be. We are so grateful to God for our precious four children!”

Lars returned home, and Selma happily got the birth announcements ready. She had a good night’s rest, and the next day wrote in her diary:

They brought Luke’s little crib and put it by my bed. He is such a dear little boy. I am so thrilled to have him...Tried all day to nurse the baby, but he isn’t the least bit interested and just wants to sleep. He is so tiny but Dr. Slutzky, the Pediatrician came and told me that he checked him good and that he seems to be fine.

Thursday, September 19: The nurse brought Baby Luke in at 6 a.m. again but he still won’t eat although his eyes were open this morning. When I was eating breakfast, he suddenly screamed and turned blue, but when I picked him up, he soon turned pink again. Later, I told the

nurse his hands and feet were blue. She took him out. Soon Dr. Slutsky came and told me that they found our precious baby suffering from heart failure. I immediately called Stella to pray and to *denpo* Lars to come. Then I called for the Protestant chaplain. When he came I asked him to baptize Luke since his condition is so serious. Gaylen and Stella came and stayed with me the rest of the day. The doctors and nurses were doing all they could. Lars finally arrived shortly before 6. Then Dr. Slutsky had to tell us that our new little son had been called to his heavenly home. What a blow, the greatest disappointment we have known. But we know God never makes a mistake and we do thank and praise Him for His mercy and love to us each day. They took me to the "General's" room where it would be quiet, and let Lars stay all night with me.

The next day the doctor reported on the autopsy that they had performed. It was the problem the doctor had feared—infantile coarctation, always fatal in infants. The large artery above the heart has an obstruction in it, but that isn't used until a few hours or days after birth and isn't detected until then. This malformation took place during the early weeks of pregnancy and was not inherited, a fact for which Selma was thankful.

Some of the missionaries in the area (Gilbertsons, Luttios, Arnolds, Wanda Anderson and Lenore Robertsdahl) came in the afternoon and they had a short service for Luke. Lars and the men then took the body to the crematorium, and the women stayed with Selma, sang more hymns, and had refreshments. Lars went home that evening, so Selma was alone in the hospital. She didn't sleep much, partly because of the noise in the ward, but also "too much remembering how happy we were two days ago."

Selma stayed with the Gilbertsons after getting out of the hospital and went back home on September 23. JohnE and Faith hadn't really comprehended what had happened because they were still looking for the baby when their mother came home. Ruthie had understood when Selma Klemesrud had told her, and they had sat together in the rocking chair and wept. She seemed rather melancholy for some time afterwards, not even wanting to play with her friends. When Selma wrote about Luke's death in their Christmas letter that year, she said:

.....his stay with us was short...The Loving Savior Who said, "Let the little ones come unto me" called Baby Luke to his Heavenly home. It was a bitter disappointment to us all, but there is a stern yet loving admonition to complete the above verse, "...and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Our other children have taught us many things in this experience. I still hear little Faith asking visitors, "Say, did you know my Baby Luke is in Heaven with Jesus?"

On September 28, missionary and Japanese friends gathered at the church in Hamamatsu for the funeral service. Olaf Hansen, the mission superintendent, gave a very comforting message and the five oldest Johnsruds sang *Children of the Heavenly Father*. Later in the fall at a Mission Conference, Selma's tears flowed again as one of the wives sang that same song. They were so appreciative of the many comforting letters and visits that they received from friends, and that kept coming for many weeks. Before they left on furlough in 1958, Lars took Luke's ashes to the Shizuoka church's crypt as negotiations for the cemetery (crypt) at Mikkabi had not been finalized.

Selma soon got busy again teaching Ruthie and caring for JohnE and Faith, and being hostess to the many guests that they continued to have. Around the middle of October she started her English and Bible classes again.



Lars reached his 35th birthday that fall and said that he had now reached “middle age.”

Selma usually did most of the work on their form letters, but this year they used an “addressograph” which made the task a little easier and faster. In spite of the sorrow that they had experienced, Selma’s entry in her diary on November 28 was:

Thanksgiving Day—and more things to be thankful for than any other year, it seems.

And on the last day of the year:

Thus ends a very eventful year. Thanks be to God for His many blessings!



## 16. Farewells and Furlough

This is the beginning of a new and eventful year." That is how Selma started her diary for 1958 as they began looking forward to going back to the USA for their first furlough. They didn't have the usual New Year's Fellowship with the Christians from the various villages until later. They spent a very quiet New Year's day at home which they enjoyed. Since the Japanese celebration of the New Year continues for four days, they were invited to Shibata-san's home on the second day and had some of the typical New Year's dishes including *ozone* and *osushi*. They had Christmas again on the third day of the new year as the gifts from the Beils and the Weertzs had arrived. Lars became ill with tonsillitis so spent a couple of days in bed but was able to be up and welcome the Christians from the villages for the service and fellowship at their home on Sunday, January 5. Selma welcomed the guests in her kimono—it had taken a half hour to get dressed with Kazuko-san's help. Thirty people gathered for the worship service and communion at ten a.m. This was followed by the sukiyaki dinner—they used the three small sukiyaki tables that they had purchased so everyone sat on the floor around these tables. There was a short testimonial meeting after dinner, then those who had time stayed and played Monopoly for the rest of the afternoon.

The Missionary Conference was held at the Bible School again January 6 to 10. Because Lars had so much Visual Aid equipment to take, they drove to Shizuoka. The first afternoon, the missionary wives met at Hyland's house and Mrs. Burgess spoke to them. The family was scheduled to stay in a room in one of the dormitories, but during the afternoon, Selma came down with a fever so Judy Hyland insisted that they stay at their house which was warmer than the dormitories. Since it was difficult for Selma to take care of the children when she wasn't feeling well, Lars called Shibata-san and she came and took JohnE and Faith home with her on the train. The children were thrilled to see Shibata-san and didn't mind going home ahead of the rest of the family. Selma recovered after a day and a half so she was able to enjoy the rest of the Conference.

The fun part of the conference was the banquet which was held at the Nakajima Hotel in downtown Shizuoka. Lars and Selma had worked out a little puppet play—*yubi ningyo*—and did it at the banquet. Selma reported, "The program was very good—except for our part which hadn't been worked out very well."

Missionary placements was always a big item on the business agenda of the conference, and hours were spent deliberating. Lars and Selma were happy when the decision was made that they were to be re-assigned to the Hamana Lagoon area after their furlough. In their absence, Nakashima Sensei and the Christians were to take over the work, and Eric and Miriam Pedersen would live in their house and start new work. (This was changed later, and Eric did cover the work in the villages during Lars' absence.)

About a week later, Lars went to Tokyo on the *Asakaze* and made reservations for them to return to the United States on the *President Cleveland* the end of May. From then on,

plans for that joyous trip were never far from their thoughts. When they went to Kyoto and had their physical examinations at the Baptist Hospital, they shopped for gifts to take with them to the USA. Other than that, their schedules continued as usual, and perhaps even busier. Lars started meetings at Hiroyama, so with the meetings he already had, he was kept very busy. Dr. & Mrs. Burgess visited them in February, and Dr. Burgess happily accompanied Lars to several of his meetings.

Amongst the Christians in their small churches, two new Christian homes had been established. Kamii Sensei, a teacher at a High School, was married at the Oiwake Cho church. His bride had been baptized the week before. They continued as faithful witnesses of their faith in Christ and dedicated workers in the church. Ezuka-san married Tamae Uchikawa, a sister of one of the young men that Lars had baptized in Mikkabi. Later another brother and both parents were also baptized.

Ezuka's wedding was the first one that Lars officiated at—and it was one that he never forgot. The part of the vows where the couple promises to be faithful "in sickness and in health" is translated "*kenko no toki demo, byoki no toki demo*" in Japanese. Lars made a mistake of only one vowel which changed the meaning dramatically! Instead of *kenko*, which means health, he said *kenka* which is translated fight, or quarrel. They told him years later, that his mistake had stood them in good stead as they had experienced a fair number of quarrels but since they had made that promise, they stayed together.

The Seminary in Tokyo had decided that it might be beneficial for some of their students to study rural evangelism, so during that spring, three seminary students spent a week helping with the special evangelism meetings that they had in Mikkabi. Dr. Fricke, the director of Foreign Missions also visited and observed the work.

In their form letter of April, 1958, Lars was enthused about the work, and had a vision of what might be done in the future:

It is a great adventure to work under and with a living Lord in a land where the majority of people worship the spirits of their ancestors or some man-made idol. Jesus lives! What a powerhouse He is as He works through His Word on the hearts of the people.

The Easter message is more real for us this year than ever before because our little baby boy was transferred to the Church Triumphant and we have found new, real, and living power in the presence of the living Christ Who is Lord of both the Militant Church here and the Triumphant Church above.

One evening, Faith-chan, our three-year-old made this observation: "Daddy, you are playing with us, but in heaven Baby Luke is playing with Jesus." Our Lord once said "Unless your faith is as a little child's, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." How true! What a contrast there is between the faith of a Christian child and the faith of a Buddhist or Shintoist. Their's is only a faint hope that is lost in the stark bleakness of death. Ours is in a living Lord—eternal, compassionate, saving.

In the last month we have held a week of special tent evangelistic meetings in each of two villages in our area. This, along with the regular schedule kept us pretty busy. Nakashima Sensei, our co-worker, was in charge of the tent meetings while I, with the help of a couple of the Christians who are pretty good preachers, carried on the regular program of meetings in the other villages. It was hard work, but I now see how we may be able to reach more of these villages. If we can get the equipment and personnel, by making up three or possibly even five

evangelistic units and teams, I think we could handle all from this center and reach out with each team holding meetings simultaneously in different villages, and so bring the Gospel to more of these ninety villages in our area which have never been reached.

Selma continued to be busy with caring for the children and her classes besides teaching Ruthie. Faith had turned three in January—"What a precious little dear she has been," her mother wrote—and started *yochien* in April. She was in the first year class and JohnE was in the third, so they went together. The flow of guests for meals and sometimes overnight continued. Eric and Miriam Pedersen came to look over the house and the work, in preparation for moving in later in the year.

In April of that year, Lars started having what he thought was rheumatism in one leg, so he went to see Dr. Kaku who gave him a shot. It was quite common to give shots for every ailment. The shot was effective, but a couple weeks later, he had a pain in his back, and was beginning to feel very tired. This could have been the beginning of the back problem that plagued him in later years. He was working very hard, and as furlough time approached, he was even busier, so it was not surprising that he was getting weary. As the Air Base was closing down, he received a lot of things from them that he thought could be used by other missionaries and Japanese friends, which resulted in a garage full of these extras—to be given away or stored.

About a month before they left for furlough, they received a letter from Dr. Syrdal informing them that they had been assigned to live in the mission house in Northfield during their year of furlough. They were not happy to receive that news as Selma wrote, "Quite a blow and a real disappointment—but I suppose it can't be changed." The reason for Selma's disappointment was that this meant that they would not be close to their friends. Most of the mission homes for missionaries on furlough were located in the St. Anthony Park area. Since that was where they had lived during Seminary days, it would have been like going home.

Selma's mixed feelings about furlough were evident in her diary entry of May 1. "This month we go to America.... But then I began to realize that next month I have to begin making speeches, so it wasn't such a happy thought after all."

The excitement was building as each day went by, but there was still a lot of work to do. Besides his regular meetings, Lars showed some of the new films and spoke at the Believers' Conference at the Bible School the first part of May. Selma and Ruthie finished their school work and Ruthie had her last test on May 5. She did well and Selma was relieved not to have to worry about the studying anymore, though she had enjoyed the experience of teaching. Approaching her eighth birthday, Ruthie was becoming a good help to her mother. Selma came home at noon one day after having spent the morning at the dentist's to find that Ruthie had washed and put away the breakfast dishes and had set the table for lunch.

The monumental job of packing was interrupted with farewell gatherings and visitors stopping in. Dr. & Mrs. Kaku had stopped by with a gift one day when Selma was not at home, so later that week, she took Ruthie and JohnE with her to go and thank them. Faith didn't want to go along because she was afraid—even at her age she had experienced his shot treatment, and was taking no chances. Eric Pedersen spent a few days getting acquainted with the work schedule with Lars. On May 18, the four churches had a joint farewell gathering at Mikkabi, and at the same time made it a welcoming party for the Pedersens. As a farewell gift to the churches, Lars and Selma gave each congregation a cherrywood communion tray. They also received several gifts. The Hamamatsu missionary ladies had a farewell coffee party for Selma, and the Oiwake Church had a farewell for the family.

On May 22, they had their last meal in their Hamamatsu home, and appreciated being invited to Klemesrud's house for lunch, and to Shibata-san's house for *osushi* in the evening. JohnE and Faith had their last day at *yochien*, so said good-bye to their teachers and friends. They finished their packing that day, and the next morning put everything into the trunk room—even the washing machine. An older man, Wada-san had been working for them for some time as a general "handy-man"—doing yard work and such, and now he helped with a lot of the heavy jobs in packing. Everything was supposed to be packed in such a way that in case something prevented them from returning to Japan, their possessions could be shipped to them, and the things they wouldn't want shipped could be disposed of in some way. So it was with a sigh of relief that they closed the door on the trunk room and left the house. As they were leaving their home of the last five years, they were leaving behind many happy memories of rich blessings experienced there.

They went to the Malmval's house (Swedish missionaries) for the Hamamatsu Missionaries' farewell breakfast. They enjoyed this last opportunity to be with these folks who had become such good friends during their first term as missionaries. They had to cut it short as a lot of other friends were waiting at the train station to see them off. Many of their Japanese friends were there to express their gratitude and to wish them well as they traveled back to the USA. They felt fortunate that there wasn't much time before they boarded the train so there was no weeping—only laughter and good wishes. The train was crowded so they had to stand as far as Shizuoka where the Johnsruds, Hylands and Bernice Boyum came to say farewell. When the train stopped in Numazu, the Eimons and Grace Nelson were there to wish them well. (This was a custom carried on during those first years of mission work—the mission family all wanted to share these special occasions.) Shibata-san traveled with them and was very helpful with the children and baggage. That evening, the Tokyo missionaries and other furlough-bound missionaries gathered at *Forbidden City* for one more Chinese meal together. That night, and the next night also, they stayed in a Japanese *yadoya* (inn) so were able to enjoy Japanese food and *futons*. They all slept in a row, and had a good rest. They spent Saturday doing last minute shopping, and even squeezed in a visit with some of their former Air Base friends.

Sunday, May 25 was the day they had been waiting for all year. They left the inn and took a taxi to Tokyo station where they checked all their baggage, then went to Chapel Center for the morning service. After lunch at a restaurant, they took the *densha* to Yokohama. They met the Luttios on the train as they were booked on the same ship. It was very crowded, both on the train and after they got off, which made for quite a hassle to get through the crowds to the taxis—with a total of seven children and six adults and all the baggage. Shibata-san was still with them, and another Japanese friend had joined them. They finally got to the dock, went through customs with their hand-baggage and boarded the *President Cleveland*. Such a relief to finally have all the packing and traveling behind them, and to look forward to two restful weeks on board ship. As usual, there were a lot of people to see them off, Japanese friends and missionaries. As in 1952 when they had sailed on this same ship to go to Japan, the Swendseids, Luttios, Sanodens, and Arnolds were their travel companions again. With that many people leaving, the send-off was a big gala affair. The ship left the dock at four p.m. with the ribbons and confetti almost obliterating the friends who were waving good-bye.

They soon found their room and unpacked some of their things before going to dinner. The children were so tired and almost fell asleep before they could taste the superb dinner that was served. The first day out at sea is usually a bit rough and this trip was no exception. A number of people didn't feel like eating breakfast the next morning. Ruthie and JohnE both had to leave the breakfast table, but felt better after awhile so came back.

They all rested a lot those first days on the ship—which was not difficult to do. Eat, sleep, play deck games, walk around the deck, sit on deck chairs and visit with friends, go to movies, or swim—when it was warm enough. It was a great way to unwind after the busy years in Japan. There was always laundry to do, however, so Selma wasn't entirely without responsibility. Lars got into trouble with Selma one day when he had promised to watch the children while she did the laundry. He got involved in a shuffle-board game and the children soon wandered down to the laundry room where Selma was—which was a very small space, and hot and steamy. There was a playroom for the children, where they spent a lot of time. Lars was given a job to do on Memorial Day—he was asked to conduct a Memorial Day service, so on short notice, he had to prepare a sermon.

JohnE celebrated his fifth birthday on the ship. At dinner that evening, the waiters brought a birthday cake to the table and sang *Happy Birthday* over the loudspeaker. A little girl also had a birthday that day, and she was coaxed to come to the Ingulrsud table and give JohnE a kiss. It took more coaxing to get him to go to her table and return the favor.

After passing Bird Island one afternoon, Faith kept talking about passing the "Hyland"—and JohnE commented, "Now the island has passed away."

Sunday, June first was spent in Honolulu. The ship docked in the harbor in the morning and they were all able to get off. Mr. Chung met them and Swendseids, presented them with leis and took them to Calvary Lutheran Church for the morning worship service. They were impressed by the beauty of the landscape, the fabulous cars and buildings. The church was new and in a beautiful setting. They were so happy to be there for the service and communion. They met Pastors Gjervick and Tysdal at a cafeteria where they had lunch. They spent time at Waikiki Beach in the afternoon where Lars and Doug and the children went swimming. The crowded beach reminded them of Japan. They got back to the ship in time for dinner—tired but eager for the last lap of their trip. The weather was somewhat cooler after leaving Hawaii, but still an enjoyable trip. The meals had been fabulous every day, and in spite of all the choices available on the menus, Ruthie, JohnE, and Faith would invariably ask for rice and *shoyu*.

They passed under the Golden Gate Bridge at noon on June 6, and the ship docked at 1 p.m. They had arrived—back to their homeland for Lars and Selma. Ruthie, JohnE and Faith had been told that this was their homeland, too, but they probably didn't feel the same excitement that their parents did. They were welcomed home by Lars' brother, Ole and Phyllis, Selma's brother, Carl and Norma Beil, and the Martinsons. Carl and Norma took them to their home in Sacramento that evening. Their year of furlough in the United States had begun.





## 17. Reunions and Deputation

One big advantage in traveling by ship is that there is no jet-lag. Lars and Selma had been setting their clocks back each day as they proceeded westward, and had two May 29s to make up for the time difference when they crossed the International Date Line. Therefore they didn't have any difficulty in functioning their first day back on American soil. They stayed at Carl and Norma's house. They had met Norma before, but this was the first time to meet them since their marriage in December of 1952, and they were happy for this opportunity to get to know their sister-in-law.

Lars had to go to a dentist right away and had two teeth extracted—the dentist was a fellow-Lutheran and didn't charge him anything. Ole and Phyllis joined them that day, and in the afternoon, the men went to look at cars that were for sale, but they weren't ready to make a purchase. They had a visit at cousin Margaret Levang's house in the afternoon, then were invited to Mrs. Inouye's for dinner. She served some Japanese food and Ruthie, JohnE and Faith were so happy. They had their fill of *gohan* and *onori*—the most food that they had eaten since leaving Japan.

After attending church and enjoying Sunday dinner at Carl and Norma's, they left with Ole for Los Angeles. During the three days that they spent there, Ole sold his 1952 Plymouth to Lars, and they spent part of one day doing repair jobs and getting the car ready for the long trip. While driving in Los Angeles one evening, Lars noticed a car coming toward them—and realized that he was driving on the left side as he had in Japan. They all enjoyed a day at Disneyland which Selma described as, "fabulous and wonderful...unique and interesting..." They were also amazed at the size of the city, the amount of traffic on the freeways, and the speed at which people drove.

They left for the journey to the mid-west on June 12 which was the beginning of three months of travel. Just as they got through the huge city of Los Angeles, they had a flat tire, and had to buy a new one. Driving across the desert was a new experience for them. They spent the first night at Needles, California, on the Arizona line. The next day they stopped at the Grand Canyon and were amazed at the majesty of the place, then drove on to Flagstaff for the night. More desert driving the next day until they reached Santa Rosa, New Mexico where they stayed in a motel. After cutting across the corners of Texas and Oklahoma, they reached Kansas on June 15. They felt like they had at last reached home territory as they visited with several of Selma's relatives. A visit to her Uncle Russell's farm involved getting stuck on a very muddy, slippery road, and finally leaving their own car and riding in her uncle's car



Ruthie in her yukata—Japanese dance (*nozakimairi*) 1958

which had to be pulled by a tractor. A picnic supper at Aunt Eva's at Salina gave them the chance to visit with the other aunts and uncles and some of the cousins. The next day, they drove to Lawrence and were amazed at the changes the new freeway had brought to the area. "The freeway is really something. We were in Lawrence in no time at all."

Visiting in the parsonage that had been her home, and seeing the old familiar church was very nostalgic for Selma. Before they left the next day, they drove around the campus of the University which was also very nostalgic and reminded them of the time they had met fifteen years earlier.

They arrived "home" in Des Moines the next day, and they were all excited to visit Grandpa and Grandma Beil in their lovely new home. Uncle Fred and Aunt Dorothea joined them for dinner that first evening. Grandma Beil was not feeling as well as she had hoped, and she had to be careful not to over-exert herself—which was difficult with the excitement of having her family at home again.

Selma had been dreading the public speaking that she was to do during their furlough. Her first assignment came the day after they arrived in Des Moines. She spoke to the Women's Guild Luncheon at St. John's Lutheran Church—her home church. She and the children wore their *yukatas*, the children sang, and Selma spoke to the ladies about Japan and their work there. She reported that the children did very well, but she was rather critical of her own part—a feeling that was not shared by anyone else.

Since Selma had spent so many years in a wheel chair, her back was not real strong. She had often gone to Dr. Accola, a chiropractor, for treatments after she had started walking. Since they were back in Des Moines, she went to him again for a treatment. The doctor made her very happy when he told her that her back was better than it had been before they had gone to Japan. He attributed the improvement partly to the fact that she had carried her babies—both before and after birth—and this had likely strengthened her back. She continued to have these treatments every time they were in Des Moines during their furlough.

Lars had driven to Minneapolis to attend the last convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church before the merger. After the convention was over, he stopped in Northfield to see the house where they would be living, then went on to Rochester for Sunday. The Zumbro Lutheran Church Women had been partially sponsoring them in Japan, so he spent part of Sunday at Zumbro, then drove back to Des Moines.

The next morning they left Des Moines to travel to Northfield to their "home" for the coming year. They were pleased with the house at 10 Lincoln Lane—a very nice three-bedroom house. Since it was completely furnished, it didn't take them long to settle in. Selma was impressed with the ease of preparing a meal that first evening as they stopped at the Red Owl Supermarket and bought frozen fish sticks and french fries and vegetables. They were experiencing many changes that had taken place during their six years in Japan, and the variety of frozen foods was one of them.

The Missionary Retreat was held at St. Olaf College that summer and started the morning after they arrived in Northfield. They were close enough to walk to the sessions, and enjoyed meeting their friends from Japan, and others from the United States and other countries. The retreat lasted three and a half days. One evening, they invited all the Japan people to their house for coffee and everyone enjoyed this "family" reunion.

The day after the retreat was over, they left for a summer of traveling and visiting churches and relatives. They had only been in their new home for less than a week, and when Faith realized that they were going to travel some more, she objected. She didn't want to leave her home and cried and cried. She finally consented to go but vowed not to get out of the car. The first day they drove to Elbow Lake and stayed at Christianson's home. These friends whom they met for the first time, had been helping to support them in Japan. Lars gave a greeting in their church the next day, then drove on to Edmore.

Ruthie had been to the Ingulsrud farm home before she was two years old, but this was JohnE and Faith's first time to be there, and to meet Grandma Ingulsrud and all the uncles, aunts, and cousins.

After a long dry spell, it started raining the day after they arrived in North Dakota and rained almost every day for a week. The farmers were happy, but it did take away some of the enjoyment of visiting and driving from place to place. For Selma, it was the coldest fourth of July that she had ever experienced. Lars preached at the two churches in the parish (Concordia being his home-church) on Sunday. In the afternoon a family reunion was held at the home place—they had planned to have an outdoor picnic, but the weather kept the sixty people inside.

They all went to the Red Willow Bible Camp for one week—and again they had a lot of rain. Selma had to return to Grandma Ingulsrud's with JohnE and Faith before the camp week was over as JohnE was sick. After that camp, they spent a few days at the farm, then left for Montana for another week of Bible Camp. This time, Grandma Ingulsrud kept JohnE and Faith with her as she felt they needed a break from all the traveling. Selma was reluctant to leave them but her concern was unnecessary as they managed fine. She was to experience the quietest vacation and best rest she had had since her babies were born—though she was often very lonesome for them.

The camp in Montana was Luther Lodge Bible Camp—a lovely site at 7000 feet in the Rocky Mountains. Lars was the mission speaker at the camp, and also showed their slides of Japan. Besides all the other activities at the camp, Lars and Ruthie enjoyed panning for gold at an old abandoned gold mine. At a "Stunt Night" program, they tried their *Yubi Ningyo* again and told the story of *Momo Taro*. Ruthie reluctantly wore her *yukata*.

It was a long trip to Montana, but they were able to visit friends and relatives along the way. They spent a night at Roy and Maida's at Billings. On the way back after the camp, they stopped in Chester, at Maynard and Ann's on a Saturday night, and their pastor asked Lars to give a short talk at their church on Sunday morning. By the time they got to Havre, Lars had to stop and take a nap before they drove on to Plentywood—where they stayed with their old friends, Dick and Dorothy Waag. They spent a lot of time reminiscing about the Seminary days in St. Paul when they shared a house. After another long drive, they arrived back at the farm at Edmore, all over-joyed to be together again. Ruthie had enjoyed many things on the trip, but because she was often car-sick, she was happy to stay put for awhile.

Selma had not driven a car before, so Lars gave her some lessons and she drove occasionally when they were at the farm—usually only short distances. The children were always so excited when she drove, and Selma had fun doing it. There were other new experiences for her and the children, too—and one of those was having a meal of *klub*—potato dumplings, a favorite of Lars'. It became a tradition for his mother to make that when the family came home. While they were at the farm, Lars enjoyed helping Frank and Arnold with whatever farm jobs they had to do—he was still a farmer at heart. Selma was getting acquainted with farm life in North Dakota, too and she often went with Grandma Ingulsrud to take lunch to the men in the fields.

They had only two days to relax on the farm and on July 31, they headed back to Minnesota. This was their ninth wedding anniversary—"Yes, nine years of real wedded bliss!" Selma wrote that they packed up for the "40-11th time." Lars had purchased quite a bit of slide projection equipment, so their car was crowded on their homeward way. They spent the night in Moorhead—at Mrs. Houg's. She had been Lars' land-lady when he was a student at Concordia College so it was a joy for him to visit with her and introduce his family to her. They arrived back at their home in Northfield the next evening—but their traveling wasn't over yet.

After re-packing and taking care of some business, they left at noon the next day—Saturday and drove to Des Moines. Not all the states had daylight saving time, so they had to set their clocks back an hour as they drove into Iowa. They arrived at Beil's in the late afternoon. Grandpa Beil was away for the week-end (for his District President responsibilities) and came home the following afternoon. Lars had left on Sunday afternoon to go to Sioux Falls to attend a Leadership Training School until the following Wednesday. During that time, Selma and the children had visited friends and enjoyed other activities—one of which was seeing the movie *Peter Pan* with Grandma and Grandpa. Later when they visited Grandma Bang in the Nursing Home, JohnE related the story to her. The second Sunday they were in Des Moines, Selma spoke to the Primary Sunday School department, and the children sang, wearing their *yukatas*. Whenever they were in Des Moines, they had Sunday dinner at *Bishops*, usually with the Weertzs.

Lars had been scheduled to make a rather lengthy trip out east and at first the plan was for Selma and the children to go along. She wanted to see Dr. Taussig again, but when they returned to Northfield from North Dakota, a letter from Dr. Taussig was waiting for them. The doctor would not be in Baltimore during August, so Selma decided that rather than go with Lars, she and the children would stay with her folks in Des Moines. But after having been there for those ten days, they realized that Selma's mother was not well enough to have that much company for any length of time, so it was decided that they would all go on the trip east. They left on August 13 and drove as far as Aurora, Illinois the first day. The next day, Lars shopped for films and equipment in Wheaton, Illinois, and also at Missionary Equipment Service in Chicago. They stopped to visit a pastor friend near Chicago and left some of the equipment there until their return trip.

They continued their trip on "the big freeway" and arrived in Pennsylvania the next evening. They had planned to reach Allentown by noon on August 16 for the Ruch Family Reunion picnic. But just as they emerged from one of the many tunnels on the Turnpike, there was a loud knocking in the engine of the car. Lars pulled over to the side, lifted the hood and found—much to his dismay, that the rod had gone through the block and the engine was ruined. He had the car overhauled in Des Moines the week before, and had checked when the mechanic tightened the bolts—so he was very surprised that this happened. A patrolman came and radioed for a service man who in turn radioed for a wrecker and they were towed into Carlisle, Pennsylvania. They were at a loss as to what to do, so Lars looked in the phone book and called a Lutheran pastor. He came right away and took them to his home where his wife served them lunch. Lars looked at the ads in the newspaper and found a 1955 Volkswagon microbus listed for \$1,400. He called the dealer who offered him \$300 for the old Plymouth—which gave them some cheer. After getting the insurance taken care of, they moved all their *nimotsu* from the old car to the Volkswagon—and were on their way at 4:30 p.m. They reached Allentown at 7 p.m. and after getting something to eat, called the Ruch family. Even though they had missed the reunion, the Ruches invited them to come out to their home. The drive was pleasant—past many old houses and through a covered bridge. They happily accepted their invitation to stay overnight, and had a good rest in the country—far from the noisy highways and trains. After worshiping with them in their large country church, and enjoying a Thanksgiving-like dinner at Ida Smith's, they left for New York.

Selma's cousin, Louie Weertz was fast becoming famous as Roger Williams, the pianist. He and his family lived in New York at that time, so Lars and Selma stopped in to see them. Louie was not there, but they did see him on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. They visited awhile with Joy and their two girls, then drove to the Lutheran Bible Institute at Teaneck, New Jersey where they had arranged to stay.

They braved the big city the next day and ended up in downtown New York near Uncle Read's office. He was the head of the World Book Encyclopedia office in New York. Selma was very happy to have this chance to see her uncle as he had just come back from Florida for a few days. She also visited with her cousin, Laura Anne.

Ruthie, JohnE and Faith wanted to go up in "the biggest building in the whole wide world" so from Uncle Read's office, they walked to the Empire State Building. They stood in line for three hours to go up and by that time, Selma was so tired and her feet hurt so she hardly felt like looking around when they did get to the top of the 102 stories. They all found it to be an exciting experience, but were ready for another good rest at LBI again that night.

They headed back to Pennsylvania on August 19 and reached Penn State University just in time for Lars to register for the International Audio-Visual (Religious) Conference. There was no room for Selma and the children to stay at the college, so they got a room in a Tourist Home. While Lars attended the conference the next day, Selma and the children took a bus to Jamestown, New York to visit the Reins. They had gotten to know each other when the Reins visited their daughter, Carolyn Johnsrud in Japan. It was quite a long trip and involved changing buses—they arrived in time for dinner in the evening. They stayed there for two nights and the children enjoyed riding horses at a farm, and one evening they watched Sputnik go over. They boarded the bus again on the afternoon of the 22nd and went to Oil City where Lars met them as his conference was over. They continued on their trip westward, stopping at Mercer overnight, and arrived at Hofrenning's near Chicago on Saturday evening.

At Sunday School the next morning, the children wore their *yukatas* and sang, and Lars showed their slides. He preached at the morning service. In the afternoon, on their way to visit the Schiodts, they almost had an accident. It must have been Lars' mistake as the other driver went by swearing at them. They stayed with other friends that night, and left the next day for the last leg of their long trip. Lars had to stop at Missionary Equipment again, and after a rather long wait, the children were very tired and restless. A meal in a Japanese restaurant cheered them up. After a supper stop near Madison, Wisconsin, and coffee at midnight at Rochester, they arrived back in Northfield at 2 a.m.

They were all glad to be home at last, and after unpacking and doing a big wash, Selma took the suitcases to the garage. They had been living out of them for over three months. They spent a day in Minneapolis—had business at the Mission Office, so while there, Selma went to Augsburg Publishing and met some of the people she used to work with. They also did some shopping in down-town Minneapolis. Since the State Fair was on, they came back to the cities the next day and spent a few hours at the Fair. Ruthie, JohnE and Faith enjoyed riding on the "Largest Merry-go-round in the World."

August 31 was Lars' last free Sunday so they decided to go to "their" church—St. Anthony Park Lutheran. They had taken a picnic lunch along and planned to go to Como Park for a picnic after the service. It was a very cool day and when they met the Swendseids at church, they invited them to come to their house instead. The children were so happy to see some of their old friends from Japan again. They had also met the Satres at church, and since Dr. Satre had been Lars and Doug's teacher at Concordia College and the Seminary, they invited the Ingulsruds and Swendseids for dinner that evening.

Their next door neighbor in Northfield, Mrs. Ditmanson had come over and introduced herself and had helped Selma make arrangements for getting the children into school. Gradually, Selma was getting to know more people in the neighborhood—and they hardly saw Ruthie some days as she was busy playing with her friends. On September 2, Ruthie enrolled in the third grade at Longfellow School, and JohnE was registered to go to afternoon kindergarten. They both seemed to enjoy school and

adjusted well to their first experience in a regular American school. Ruthie came home for lunch each day, and JohnE went back with her for the afternoon.

On September 6, Lars left for his first regular deputation trip—Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He was to be gone for several days and Selma expressed her feelings in her diary: "So we are without him now and I don't like it a bit." Since Lars had the car, and Selma didn't drive much, they walked to church (ten blocks) and to the store. As they became better acquainted, they sometimes got rides with neighbors or friends.

The first Sunday they were alone, Grandpa and Grandma Beil and Aunt Dorothea came and stayed overnight on their way farther north. The children were thrilled to have Grandpa join them on the sofa and tell them stories. Lars came back for just long enough to get some rest and get ready to leave again. This time he headed for North Dakota. The Beils and Weertzes stopped in again on September 13, and took Selma and the children out for dinner to celebrate Ruthie's birthday.

"This is the eighth birthday of my first darling baby. How time flies!" Selma wrote. She had invited Lillian Anderson and her two sisters, Clara and Mildred to come for Ruthie's birthday dinner. Lillian brought the birthday cake for her godchild. In the afternoon, Clara took them for a drive around the St. Olaf and Carleton campuses.

Selma always loved to have company, and was beginning to return the hospitality of some of her neighbors who had invited her to coffee parties. A retired missionary couple from Madagascar, the Hofstads lived on the same street, and Selma was happy to get to know them. They took her with them to the Mission Society at St. John's church where she met a lot of other retired missionaries. She was also beginning to find girls who could baby-sit when she had to be away at functions like PTA at the elementary school, or women's circle meetings. One time the baby-sitter was a St. Olaf College student who was Chinese—and Faith was so happy to have an Oriental person stay with them. She was missing her Japanese helpers.

Lars returned from North Dakota the following week, and his next deputation assignment was at Zumbro Lutheran Church in Rochester, their sponsoring congregation. On September 22, they all went to speak to the Sunday Schools—the children sang again, and Lars gave greetings at each of the worship services. In the evening, the church had a potluck supper after which Ruthie did her Japanese dance "*Nozaki Mairi wa*" and Lars showed the movie, *Japan and the Cross*.

When Lars had deputation assignments within Minnesota, he would try to drive home again at night—even if it meant not getting home until 3 a.m. The end of September, he had another assignment in North Dakota so was gone for four days again. The day after he left, Ruthie fell out of a tree and broke her wrist. She also had been "knocked out" for a minute. Selma called the doctor and he came to the house, but since her arm needed to be X-rayed, he took them to his office. He found that both bones were "wrinkled"—and put a cast on her arm. She had a lot of pain and hardly slept that night. Since it was Sunday the next day, a neighbor offered to give them a ride to church, but when she heard about Ruthie's broken wrist, she offered to stay with her while Selma, JohnE and Faith went to the service. On Monday morning, as her arm was still painful, Selma called a taxi and took her to the doctor. They X-rayed it again—through the cast, and found that the bones had slipped. She was scheduled to go into the hospital the next morning. Being alone with the children, Selma had a very busy day—she had Ruthie stay next door while she and Faith went to get JohnE at school. She washed clothes and hung them out, and when it started to rain had to take them in and hang them in the basement. So she was especially happy when Lars came home from North Dakota that evening. The next day they took Ruthie to the hospital and Selma stayed with her while Lars took care of JohnE and Faith at home. They had to give Ruthie an anesthetic to reset her arm, which made

her sleep most of the afternoon. She spent that night in the hospital and felt fine when they brought her home the next day, and went back to school in the afternoon.

Lars was beginning to feel weary from all the traveling he had to do, but he was more concerned about Selma as it was hard for her to be alone with the children so much, and to do all her own work. So in early October he went to the Mission Office and told them that they would like to go back to Japan in February. A couple weeks later, they both went to the Mission Office and asked Mr. Lerberg to make bookings on a ship in February so that they could return to Japan. The *President Wilson* would sail on February 20, and they hoped that they could go on that ship. They were doing as much shopping as possible to prepare for their return—often spending a day in the Cities to shop. Lars also wrote to the Executive Committee of the Mission in Japan and told them of their desire to return early. Later in October a reply came from Olaf Hansen, the Mission Superintendent. He discouraged them from returning before summer when the next group of missionaries would leave. In response to that letter, Lars sent a request to the Mission Conference asking them to consider letting them return early. They would have to wait for the decision as the Conference would not meet until January.

In the meantime, Selma went to the Heart Hospital in Minneapolis and saw Dr. Dwan, the heart specialist whom she had seen before they left for Japan in 1952. He gave her a thorough examination while six other doctors and surgeons—some from other countries—observed. He gave her a very good report, and told Lars that she was fine and could go back to Japan. This made her very happy and thankful. Dr. Dwan sent a copy of his report to Dr. Taussig also.

After one trip to the Cities, Lars surprised the family with a cabinet combination radio-record player-12inch TV which he had bought for \$40. They were all so surprised and delighted. Ruthie said, "Now at last we have a real American house because we have TV." After watching TV for awhile one evening, Selma commented, "Great little invention!"

An illustration of the tone in America at that time: A lady who was the warden for their block in case of war came to register their names.

They had missionary friends visit them occasionally—some who were in the area for deputation—Ruth Herbst, Dick and Irene Nelson, Vern Toso, Phil and Margaret Luttio. Swendseids and Sanodens sometimes just came to visit, and they often visited friends when they went to the Cities. Relatives also showed up on their doorstep once in awhile. Art and Bertha brought Grandma Ingulsrud for a week-end visit in October. While they were there, they all made a trip to Minneapolis and went to the new mall, Southdale. "It is a fabulous group of stores—just like fairyland...," Selma wrote.

One Sunday, Lars had a speaking appointment at a church about 120 miles from Northfield, and the whole family went along. It meant leaving at 5:30 a.m. so the children stayed in their pajamas and climbed into sleeping bags and slept for a couple of hours. They changed into their Japanese outfits for the Sunday School sessions, and relaxed at the parsonage during the second service. In the afternoon, they drove to another town nearby and visited Pastor and Mrs. Braaten. Lars was very pleased to be able to visit with the pastor who had confirmed him, and had influenced him in his decision to enter foreign mission service.

Near the end of October when the children had some days off from school, they made another trip to Des Moines. Besides visiting with the Beils and Grandma Bang, Lars spoke at the Thankoffering service at the West Des Moines church where he and Selma had served during the summer of 1951. The following Sunday was a very big day for them in Lawrence, Kansas. The Beils went with them and they all enjoyed renewing acquaintances at the Beil's former home and church. Lars spoke at both morning services, Selma spoke to the Sunday School, and the children sang—again wearing their

Japanese clothes. The pastor had both Lars and Selma walk up the aisle with him, and he had asked Selma to bring a greeting, too. After the first service, and after speaking to the Sunday School, Selma began getting very nervous thinking about walking up that aisle again, and giving another greeting—especially since that service was broadcast over the radio. Her nervousness led to a tachycardia attack. Lars took her to the cloakroom and tried to stop it—without success. It was time for Lars to go in for the service, so the usher called for Dr. Auchard, and he and the Beils rushed in. The doctor was able to get her heart beating regularly again. Selma then went to the parsonage and rested until noon. She was keenly disappointed that she wasn't able to continue at church and see more of their friends.

They had a full evening when Lars showed the film *Japan and the Cross* and their slides. The next day they drove back to Des Moines and continued all the way home to Northfield. Selma had to rest on Monday as she still felt very tired and nervous. The next day when she took Ruthie to the doctor to have an X ray on her arm, Selma asked him to check her "ticker" since she still didn't feel real well. He found that it was beating a little fast, so gave her a prescription to help quiet her nerves.

Grandma Beil came the end of October to spend about ten days with them. She realized that Selma needed some help, and she herself was feeling better by then. Lars had another speaking appointment in North Dakota, so was gone for three days.

Being so close to St. Olaf College, they had opportunities at the college to talk about their work in Japan. Lars spoke to a group in the Men's Dorm one evening, and showed a movie another evening. Selma was asked to give the devotions in a Girls' Dorm and remarked afterwards that she must have been tired as she got so very nervous again.

On November 12, Lars left for North Dakota on a longer assignment. He would be there until the end of the month and again Selma was not happy to have him gone so long. The next day, she was scheduled to speak at a Women's Circle meeting and was so nervous about it that she didn't sleep well. In the morning, her nervousness continued and she was afraid she was going to pass out, so she called the doctor. He came to see her and told her it was only nerves, so gave her some medicine and assured her that she could go to speak at the meeting. She rested as much as possible during the day, and her speech and slides on Japanese women and customs was very well received. "And praise the Lord! I hardly got nervous at all. I was so thankful!"

A week later, she spoke to the Mission Society at St. John's Lutheran Church, and again was very nervous doing the preparations and before she spoke. She felt more at ease after she got started and again it went very well—the ladies were very appreciative. That evening she wrote in her diary, "I was ashamed of my self-consciousness."

Since Lars was already in North Dakota, they had decided to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with the family at Edmore. The day before Thanksgiving, Selma and the children went by train to North Dakota. It had turned cold and was snowing, so the children were to experience their first real winter. The whole trip turned out to be an experience they didn't want to repeat. Their train from Northfield was late and they missed the connection in St. Paul. They had to take another train which would take them to New Rockford instead of Lakota. In the rush, Selma dropped the tickets and had some anxious moments before the porter told them to get on the train anyway—just when another man who had picked up their tickets brought them to her. The train trip was pleasant, but Lars hadn't gotten the telegram that Selma sent until he got to Lakota, so they had to wait an hour and a half for him to come and pick them up. The station manager took them to the hotel where they had supper while they waited. They were all so happy to be together again that they didn't mind the one hundred mile drive to the farm. It was eight degrees below zero, and since the microbus had no heater, Selma and the children got into their sleeping bags for the trip.



The next day, they had Thanksgiving dinner with Grandma Ingulsrud, Frank, Arnold and Betty and Vickie, an enjoyable day. They had expected Ann, Maida, and Bertha and their families to join them for Thanksgiving, but the bad weather kept them from coming. Then to add to their misfortunes, they came down with stomach flu—JohnE, Ruthie, Faith, one at a time, and finally Selma. Fortunately, it lasted less than a day for each. When they left to go back to Northfield on Saturday, the rest of the family were all feeling all right but Lars had a fever. Lars and Frank had installed a propane gas heater into the microbus for the trip home. It was twenty-five degrees below zero that morning, so to start the Volkswagon, Lars built a fire under it. They stopped at Vinge's at Larimore, and Marie sent Lars to a doctor where he got a shot and some medicine—and he also put on some heavy underwear. To add to the difficulties, the rough road made the ride very uncomfortable. They arrived back home at 10 p.m. and no place had ever looked better to them.

Lars had to speak in Owatonna the next day, so they had to leave early. Lars preached at the two services and Selma spoke at the Sunday School departments. After an evening meeting where Lars showed their slides and spoke, they drove home and Lars fell into bed with a temperature of 103.5°. It took him two or three days to recover. The following Sunday he was in North Dakota again, but this time, he went by train from St. Paul. He came back to St. Paul on Monday, then flew to Pittsburgh and was gone until Friday.

Selma hadn't been feeling quite well for awhile, so while Lars was in Pittsburgh, she went to see Dr. Good.

"He gave me the good news that our 5th precious little bundle from heaven should arrive about July 12, if I'm careful. Surely hope we can really have the dear little one."

It had always been obvious that Selma loved having children. She felt so happy to be pregnant and bear children because that made her as capable as women who were healthier.

When December came, they enjoyed the celebration of Christmas in Minnesota. One of the first events that they took in was the St. Olaf College Choir's Christmas concert. They had been able to get tickets for themselves and the Swendseids. Doug and Mavis came for supper and the four of them went to the concert, leaving the six children with a baby-sitter. All the houses on Lincoln Lane had big electric candles on their lawns, and they were all lit up as part of the decorations for the concert. The children were also enjoying the Minnesota Christmas and with their Daddy, had fun sliding in the snow on St. Olaf Hill.

Selma had caught a bad cold and her sinuses were giving her a lot of discomfort, so she had gone to her doctor for medicine a week before Christmas. She also had a very bad headache, and had spent one afternoon lying down to get over it. Ruthie and JohnE's Christmas vacation from school began on December 20. They left that day and drove to Des Moines to spend Christmas with the Beils. Either the microbus wasn't very smooth riding, or road conditions were bad because the ride got too bumpy for Selma and she ended up sitting in the more comfortable back seat. Those were the days before seat-belts, and after they got into the city of Des Moines, Lars had to make a sudden stop at a red light. JohnE fell against the little gas heater and burned his cheek.

December was generally free of deputation duties as most churches were too busy with their Christmas services. That meant that Lars had the Sunday before Christmas at home. However, Dr. Beil asked him to preach at a mission church at Johnston on December 21. He and Dr. Beil went to that church while Selma and her mother and the children went to St. John's. They also attended the Sunday School Christmas program which was an enjoyable event. In the evening, they all went to the mission church's Sunday School Christmas program where Ruthie wore her kimono and the three of them sang, "*Morobito*" (*Joy to the World*). The Sunday after Christmas, too, was a busy one for Lars as



*Northfield, Minnesota, 1959*

he preached at two services at Central Lutheran church in Des Moines.

Christmas in Des Moines was not a white Christmas that year—it was more like the weather in Japan in December. Selma was especially happy to attend the Christmas Eve service at St. John's. They had a wonderful family Christmas. The children hung up their stockings on a little fireplace that Grandpa Beil had made for the occasion, and the next day they could hardly contain their excitement when they

opened all their gifts. In the late afternoon, they went to the Weertzes for the family Christmas dinner. One of their Christmas gifts from Grandma Beil was tickets for all to *Holiday on Ice*. Two days after Christmas, this was one of the highlights of their Christmas vacation.

Selma had not been feeling well because of her pregnancy, and the nausea was becoming worse. She had not told her parents about the new baby until Christmas day.

"I decided to tell the folks about our new little Baby-san we are looking forward so much to having. They seemed terribly surprised at first, but later seemed a bit relieved that there is a reason for my being so tired now." In spite of not feeling well, she was able to have visits with quite a few of her old friends, all happy occasions.

The snow they had been waiting for came the last day of the year, and the children had fun playing in it. Lars "worked" in it as he shoveled the walks at Beil's house and then went to the Weertz's house and did the same. Uncle Fred rewarded him with a nice dark suit, ten shirts, and a bunch of neckties. The Weertzes joined them at the Beil's for New Year's day dinner which they enjoyed while watching the Rosebowl parade. They returned to Northfield on January 3.

The Beils visited them once more before they left Northfield. They spent two nights with them when Dr. Beil spent a day at Northwestern Seminary in Minneapolis. They were able to wish Faith a happy birthday, but had to leave the day before her actual day. She had a party with friends on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday, January 18, Selma wrote in her diary: "This is our dear little Faith's 4th birthday. She is such a little sweetheart, and we are so thankful for her."

About the middle of January, they received a letter from Olaf Hansen telling them that the mission conference had decided that they could come back to Japan anytime, but they wanted them to live in Tokyo and study language until summer. They agreed to that plan, and started making preparations for returning. They had found out that they could not get bookings on a ship during March or April, and the Mission would not send them by ship later than that because of the baby, so they were told that they would have to fly.

Lars didn't have many speaking assignments in January, and the ones he had were in the vicinity so didn't require much travel. Selma also spoke at some Sunday Schools and Women's groups right in Northfield, or nearby. Giving these presentations didn't bother her as much as before. The first week in February, Lars took JohnE and Faith with him to North Dakota for a week. Ruthie had just recovered from the mumps (after having had mumps on one side in Japan, she now had it on the other side.) She also had school so

she stayed at home with her mother. Lars' last deputation trip was to Wisconsin the middle of February. He went by bus, then after his appointments on Sunday, he flew to Chicago and went to the Japanese Consulate to get their visas, then flew back to Minneapolis.

They had been finishing their shopping and little by little, Lars got their nine barrels and four trunks packed. They had often shopped at the "Ole Store," and had ordered some cases of groceries to take back to Japan. When they went to pick them up, Mr. Lien said that they were a gift, and weren't to be paid for. They sent their baggage on February 18. A few days later, Arnold, Betty and Bertha came from North Dakota. They spent a couple of days with them and when they left, they loaded their car with the things that Lars and Selma wanted to store in Edmore.

The children were enjoying the winter as much as possible before they were to leave, and often went sliding on St. Olaf Hill, or went skating. Lars often went with them since he was home more at that time. After one of those fun times, Faith came back with a handkerchief tied around her head. She had quite a gash in her head—she had hit something coming down the hill. They put on some "black salve"—the old stand-by, bandaged it, and she was soon all right.

The Volkswagon microbus had served them well for all their travels, but it was not comfortable for Selma to ride in—so in January, Lars sold it for \$1240, and bought a 1950 DeSoto for \$200.

The last weeks were very busy with their packing and cleaning the house before they moved out. They also had several invitations to the homes of people that they had come to know since arriving six months earlier—some were neighbors, some were retired missionaries, and some they had learned to know at church and through the children's school. They also continued to have visits from some of their colleagues from Japan, and often saw them when they went to the Cities. There were even some visits from former Hamamatsu Air Base friends who now lived in Minnesota. As enjoyable as these social contacts were, with the work of getting ready to leave, and her pregnancy, Selma often noted in her diary that she was very tired. Finally, on February 27, they had finished cleaning the house—with the help of the Mykeljords, former missionaries. They left Northfield in the late afternoon and drove to the Beil's home in Des Moines.

After spending three days in Des Moines, they traveled to Salina, Kansas. The Beils went with them in their own car, and that evening the whole Beil clan gathered for a covered dish supper. The next morning, they said their farewells—Lars and Selma and children driving west, and the Beils going back to Des Moines. They expected that they wouldn't meet again until their next furlough.

They went as far as Denver the first day. The car needed some work done on it, and that took part of one day. Lars spoke at a Brotherhood meeting at one church, and at a Lenten service at another. They stayed at cousin Inez's house for two nights. The next day, they drove through the mountains and reached Green River, Utah, and the following day got as far as St. George, where they spent the night. By the time they got into Nevada the next day, they had to take off their winter coats. Through Las Vegas, then on to the freeway at San Bernadino and they got into Norwalk by early evening. Again they stayed with Ole and Phyllis. Since it was so warm there, the children enjoyed playing out-of-doors. They had a Sunday without any responsibility and went with Ole and Phyllis to church. However, a couple of evenings later, Lars spoke to the Brotherhood. They enjoyed a day at Knotts' Berry Farm, and other sightseeing—a relaxing break in their travels.

On March 11, they drove to Sacramento and spent five days with Carl and Norma again. While there, Selma spoke to Norma's church women's circle meeting, showing the slides of Japan. She had a very bad headache that day, and rested in the afternoon (in her

diary she made no mention of the headache). This was the last time she gave a presentation on Japan and the women had appreciated it a great deal. Lars showed slides and spoke at the Japanese Methodist Church where their friends, the Inouyes were members. On Sunday, he spoke at the Sunday School and morning service at Bethel Lutheran. In the evening they all went to Fruitridge Lutheran Church for a potluck supper after which Lars showed his slides for the last time on this furlough.

Besides having these responsibilities, they did do some sightseeing, and visited cousin Margaret Levang. After an enjoyable visit, Carl drove them to the San Francisco airport in their DeSoto. He sold it for them later. Their plane for Hawaii left at midnight, and their first furlough was over.

## 18. *Heaven's Call*

They arrived in Honolulu in the morning, and Pastor Gjervick welcomed them with the usual leis. He took them to their hotel near Waikiki Beach where they spent two restful days. Lars and the children enjoyed swimming in the ocean and the hotel pool. They appreciated the hospitality of the Gjervicks and some of the church members during their stay. They bought Hawaiian style clothes at the International Market, and went to see the Blow Hole.

At 8 p.m. they boarded the plane for Tokyo, skipped a day as they crossed the International Date Line, stopped at Wake Island for refueling, and arrived in Tokyo at 10 a.m. on March 20.

Several of the missionaries were there to welcome them back as well as their faithful friend and helper, Shibata-san. Eleanor Hansen took them to their new home at Denenchofu. She had brought lunch for them, and she and Paul Vang joined them for their first meal back in Japan.

Shibata-san stayed for two nights and helped them get somewhat settled, and did some grocery shopping for them. Another missionary, Earl Bergh lived in the next apartment, so it was arranged that a maid who had worked in this house before would continue and work for them and for Earl. Being back in Japan where central heating was not common, they found the bedrooms to be very cold. The first couple of days were rainy and gloomy, and since they were all tired from the long trip, it took a little adjusting to living in Japan again. Nevertheless, there was a sense of relief and joy in being back where they felt they belonged.

Selma soon made an appointment with the doctor at the Seventh Day Adventist clinic at Harajuku and had a checkup. The doctor said that everything was all right with the baby. Lars enrolled at the Naganuma Language School to begin studying in two weeks. They had to take care of the usual registrations for foreigners living in Japan. Gradually, they got settled into their new schedule. Lars had ordered a television kit with the money that they had received from Uncle Read, so he spent an afternoon getting that set up. They were pleased with the clear picture they were able to get, and enjoyed a couple of English programs the first night.

When they had been back one week, they took the train to Hamamatsu to be welcomed back by the church people of the Hamana Lagoon area. They stayed in their old home where the Pedersens now lived. The children were excited to see their old playmates in the neighborhood again. The next day was Easter Sunday, March 29. The Christians from all the churches came together for a joint service at a hotel in Washizu. There was good attendance and they were happy to see everyone. At the worship service, they had communion and one baptism. It was Masako Yamamoto who was baptized and since she had been working at Hylands, Judy Hyland and the girls came for this special occasion. Lars preached at the service after which they all had lunch together. After visiting with the people and enjoying *ocha* and *osembe* (tea and rice crackers), they returned to

Hamamatsu. Lars went with Eric to the evening meeting at Mikkabi and Selma and the children stayed and visited with Miriam and Beth. The train ride back to Tokyo the next day was very crowded and they sat on their suitcases in the vestibule for over an hour. It helped to take their time eating in the diner until they finally got seats in the third class sleeper. Komatsu-san, their maid made supper for them when they got home. Selma was very thankful to once again have help with her housework.

While they had been at their old home in Hamamatsu, they had taken some of their things out of storage. They needed curtains in the Denenchofu house, so brought some of their curtains back and Komatsu-san altered and pressed them, and Lars hung them. One afternoon, Selma and Ruthie had shopped for curtains for their bedrooms at a department store, and found that more of the things they needed were now available in Japan. Besides getting the house settled, Selma also worked on a form letter that they sent to friends and relatives back in the USA to inform them of their new address.

In her diary entry for April 2, Selma wrote that she went to bed early because she had been having a headache off and on all week, so didn't feel quite up to par. She felt better the next day, and since JohnE also felt better after having an upset stomach for a couple of days, she left the children with Komatsu-san and met Lars at Harajuku. They met the other Tokyo missionaries at their favorite restaurant *Forbidden City* and enjoyed the fellowship and the delicious Chinese food as they had often done during their first term. On the way home on the *densha* Selma's severe headache returned. The next day she was thankful that JohnE was better—she had been concerned because he had been having those stomach upsets so often, but she herself was not better—her headache was very bad so she stayed in bed all day except to get up and get meals. In the evening, she washed and pinned up Ruthie and Faith's hair, and bathed the children, but was too tired to do her own hair. They woke up to a dark, rainy Sunday and her head was nearly splitting—she had never had such pain. She tried to call Dr. Woods, but he was off duty. She managed to get dressed, and they went to Harajuku in a taxi. She went to the SDA clinic and Lars and the children went to Union Church. She finally saw Dr. Nelson who diagnosed her illness as the 'flu since she also had a slight fever. He gave her some capsules, and told her to go to bed, so she went home in a taxi. She didn't eat or even read all day. "It's a long time since I have had so much pain and felt so miserable."

That evening, Toshiko-san and Shimizu-san who had been in Tokyo for a meeting over the week-end, came for supper which Lars cooked. Toshiko-san stayed overnight. Toshiko-san had just resigned as Parish Worker in Numazu and would start as a second year student at the Bible School the following week. Since she was free until then, Lars asked her to stay and help as Komatsu-san was going to be away for a few days. Selma had a very restless night that Sunday night with a lot of aches and pains, but on Monday the pains were less severe and she began to have a little appetite. Lars had been planning to go to a Study Conference for missionaries to study the other religions of Japan. This was in Osaka and Kyoto and would continue for two to three days. Since Toshiko-san could stay and help Selma, they decided that he could go.

On Tuesday, April 7, she felt a little better, but she still stayed in bed as the fever returned in the afternoon. She felt very weak whenever she tried to get up. On Wednesday, she came downstairs and lay on the sofa and watched TV. Her head and neck were aching most of the time, but she came downstairs so that Ruthie and Toshiko-san could go and see the movie *The Ten Commandments*. She and Lars had seen it the week before and were impressed.

In spite of feeling very weak, she struggled and made supper. Lars came back from the conference the next morning, and started language school that afternoon. She had stayed in bed all morning, but felt a little better in the afternoon.

April 10 was the wedding day of the Crown Prince of Japan—a national holiday when Crown Prince Akihito married Michiko Shoda, a commoner. Lars did not have school, and they had guests in the afternoon when they all watched the royal procession on TV. Toshiko-san left to go back to Numazu. Since Selma was feeling better, she got up and dressed in the morning, but her headache returned. She took aspirin and spent the rest of the morning resting. The following day was the same—she was up, but rested a lot. The pastor from the Lutheran *yochien* nearby stopped in to inquire about JohnE and Faith starting *yochien* the following week.

Sunday, April 12, Selma felt quite a bit better. She made breakfast and did the dishes. They all went to Union Church and from there walked to *Forbidden City* and enjoyed a delicious meal again. Lars took the children home and left them with Komatsu-san. Selma had waited at Harajuku station as her headache had returned. They went to Sorensens for the monthly ELC Mission Fellowship and visited until almost 9 p.m. The next day, her diary noted, "I felt rather tough again today. Maybe I overdid by being away all day yesterday." JohnE and Faith started *yochien* and Selma started teaching Ruthie. She spent the morning with her, then rested until Lars came home from school at 4 p.m. Their shipment from the US was delivered that afternoon and Lars started unpacking it. Selma tried to help him, but she felt so weak—it was hard even to stand up.

April 15 was Selma's birthday. "Well, here it is another birthday for me. This should be the peak of my life—#35! But now I feel I am at least 135," she wrote. She fixed a roast for supper, but was too tired to make dessert—which she didn't need to do as Lars bought a beautiful chocolate birthday cake and ice-cream. She was still trying to teach Ruthie each day, but on April 16 she wrote in her diary that she felt almost too weak to sit up. After staying in bed all afternoon, she did get up and prepare supper. On the 17th, she went to see Doctor Wood. He still thought her headache was sinus trouble and gave her more medicine. She and Ruthie took a taxi home from the clinic and she felt too tired to prepare lunch. Ruthie did it for her.

There were no more entries in her diary after that. On the 19th, Lars wrote in her diary that she couldn't sleep because of her headache, and on April 20, she entered the SDA hospital. From then on, Lars and the other missionaries were very concerned—especially because the doctors didn't seem to know what her ailment was. Lars had to make a one-day trip to Shizuoka for a committee meeting, and the missionaries who met him that day knew that he was very worried. There was none of the usual jovial talk. He hadn't wanted to leave Tokyo at all, and hurried through the business as quickly as he could and went back to the hospital. The doctors then thought that it was Japanese encephalitis, and had changed the treatment and medication.

After almost three weeks in the hospital, the doctors didn't have much hope for her recovery, and Lars was aware of the desperate situation. However, he was not willing to let her go, and spent one night "wrestling" with the Lord. Finally, he came to the realization that the Lord was not going to heal her, and he surrendered his will to God's: "All right, Lord. You can take her home."

In spite of his sorrow, the Lord gave him peace and the next day, May 12, 1957, at 10:42 a.m., he was with her when she died. Eleanor Hansen, who had been helping with the nursing care, was also with them. Lars gathered up her belongings, and went home and told the children. He wrote the last entry in her diary: "Was taken to her heavenly home." And the little baby that they had hoped to welcome into the family in July was taken with her.

When Selma passed away, her doctor, Dr. Woods wept with Lars. He had been treating her for over a month, and was unable to successfully diagnose and treat her ailment. An autopsy was performed to determine the cause of death and they found a brain abscess on the right frontal lobe. At that time they didn't know what had caused the abscess, but

later in consulting with her doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital, they surmised that every time she had had a tachycardia attack, the temporary interruption of the blood flow to the brain had caused a condition that gradually developed into an abscess.

The following day, Selma's body was cremated and a memorial service was held in Tokyo. A few days later, the main memorial service was held in the church in Hamamatsu. Besides the many missionaries present, there were also many Japanese who had known and loved Selma. Olaf Hansen, who spoke through an interpreter, brought a message of comfort and hope and spoke about Selma's life—the blessings that she had brought to so many during the thirty-five years that she had lived. His message was based on II Corinthians 3:18:

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

He talked about what a radiant personality Selma had been, and that the reason she was so radiant was because she was beholding the glory of the Lord, and was being changed into His image. Death, then, is not the end of a Christian's life, but just the completion of that changing process—now she is like Him because she sees Him as He is.

"She is with Christ, and Christ is with us, so she cannot be very far away." Olaf ended his message with an invitation to those who did not have this hope of meeting in Heaven to believe in Christ as Savior. At the end of the service, Lars spoke to express his thanks to everyone. He looked a bit worn and tired, but was very composed, while nearly everyone else was weeping. He said that when Selma passed away, he kept asking, "Why now? Why did she have to be taken now?"

Then he read Acts 1:7:

*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power, but you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses.*

The missionaries and Japanese friends gathered at Pedersen's house (Lars and Selma's former home) for lunch, but Lars wasn't able to stay very long as he was eager to get back to Tokyo to the children. Toshiko Yamamoto, who had stayed with the children during the last week and was with them when Selma passed away, was amazed at how the children seemed to have accepted her death. They were satisfied to know that their Mommy was in such a nice place, and about all they could talk about was Heaven. They were disappointed that there would be no baby brother or sister, the addition to their family that they had all been anticipating.

Lars did not have the children with him at the memorial services, and years later, he regretted that decision and wondered why he had not had them attend. Was it because he was so overcome with grief that he was incapable of giving such a decision sufficient consideration?

Selma's ashes were put into the crypt in the Shizuoka Church until the following year when the mausoleum near Mikkabi was completed. That mausoleum was built on land donated by Suzuki-san, one of the faithful members of the Mikkabi church, and gifts given in memory of Selma were used to finance the small building. In the early summer of 1960, Pastor Kawashima, the president of the Tokai Lutheran Church conducted the dedication of the mausoleum when another memorial service was held. On a placard on the front of the building is the inscription stating that it was dedicated in Selma's memory.



Lars wrote: "We know that Selma's life and death here has made an imprint on the hearts of many people. We hope and pray that that influence may grow and result in the salvation of many."





# Part IV

*Grace*



## 19. *From Northern Norway to Saskatchewan*

A family gathering brought us to Laukli in Northern Norway one afternoon in July of 1980. The family members were relatives of my father, of the “next” generation—some of my cousins. Since the cousins who remained were children of Dad’s oldest sisters, they were quite a bit older than we were. My sister Doris was much better in the language than I was and she had gleaned some family history from the cousins who lived in that area. One of these cousins was now the owner of Laukli, the former family home, and had recently built a new summer cabin (*hytte*) not far from the location of the original house. The house where my Dad, Jacob Andreas Nelson was born had burned down a few years before. There was a rumor that a disgruntled relative was responsible for the fire—after a disagreement as to who should fall heir to the place. We spent an enjoyable Sunday afternoon there, and since the house was new, the cousin who now owned it asked Lars to lead in praying for God’s blessings on their new *hytte*. The *rome-grot* they served was delightful—in that setting, even Lars and Joel and Leon enjoyed it.

As we walked around in the yard at Laukli, we remembered some of the stories that Dad had told about life there.

He had been born on August 17, 1895 on the farm, *Laukli*, which was on the side of a mountain. He was the sixth child of Jakob and Ingeborg Olsen—there were five sisters older. In February following my father’s birth, his father became very ill with bleeding ulcers. It was the coldest time of the year and even in nice weather it was difficult to get a doctor to come. A doctor did manage to come to see him, but he couldn’t give him the care that he should have had in a hospital and he died at home at the age of forty-four. Baby Jakob was baptized a few months later and was given his father’s full name—Jakob Andreas Olsen. Later after they arrived in the United States, he was given his step-father’s name of Nelson. (He always regretted that he did not carry on his father’s name. He also often said that he should have taken the name *Laukli* as his surname, as some of the offspring of his sister who inherited the farm have done.)

Making a living on the Laukli farm was not easy. Jacob’s mother had married Ole Nelson, a nephew of her first husband and two more sons and another daughter were added to the family. The family was very poor and didn’t even have enough food to eat. Dad often related a story of his school life. He wasn’t able to take lunch with him to school because there wasn’t enough food at home. A kind friend noticed this, so offered him one of his sandwiches. This went on for a few days until one day when his mother had enough to give him a small lunch. He didn’t think it would be right to accept his friend’s bread when he had some of his own, so he politely declined his friend’s offer. He could easily have eaten both. After that, his friend apparently thought it wasn’t necessary to help him, so most days, Jacob went hungry.

His step-father went to the United States in 1903-4 as an uncle had immigrated to Wisconsin and sent him the ticket. He worked for five years, then went back to Norway

bringing with him a walking plow and a grass broadcaster determined to farm the way they did in America. With a team of horses, he tried to break up the land and seed it to grass but the horses sank into the swampy land. The land there was just not suited for that type of farming. He sent the plow back and went back to America and started preparing to bring his family over. They left Norway in 1909—Jacob was fourteen years old and traveled with his mother and four sisters and two brothers. The two older sisters remained in Norway, never to see most of their family again. (Dad was able to see his two sisters shortly before they passed away when he made a trip to Norway in 1953.)

After eleven days on the steamboat, they arrived at New York, but had to spend about three days on Ellis Island. They had to have a certain amount of money to enter the United States so they had to wait until their father was able to get \$25 sent to them. He had contacted a pastor in New York who brought them the money. They were happy to get out of this place that seemed like a prison. They went by train to Minneapolis via Montreal where they were met by their father, Ole Nelson and his brother John. They lived in a house on Milwaukee Avenue—one of the several houses on that avenue that were later renovated and preserved for historical purposes.) Ole had to work very hard for only two dollars a day, while the children went to school. In 1910, Ole took the train to Canada, arriving in Swift Current. After getting maps of available homesteads, he walked south from Swift Current, carrying nothing except his Bible with him. He filed on a homestead for himself and for three of his relatives. Since Jacob was too young, he couldn't get a homestead at that time, but later was able to file on one that had been cancelled—his step-father, Ole was able to hold it for him until he was eighteen.

The rest of the family arrived in Swift Current in August of 1910. They lived in a sod shack until they got their house built by late fall. They fished in Lac Pelletier all winter, sold the fish from house to house in Swift Current in order to buy groceries. They worked at various jobs to make money for living and for buying oxen or horses for farming. Farming at that time meant breaking up the sod first, then seeding. Later, Jacob and his cousin attended business college in Swift Current—studying for four months during two winters. At the time that he was ready to get a job as book-keeper, World War I had started and because all young men were expected to join the army, he had difficulty being hired. He finally did get a job in a lawyer's office and though he enjoyed it, the recruiting officers kept bothering him, so he left and went farming. Later he was conscripted but didn't pass the medical—he was very thin, and not considered strong enough. Had he known that he was not physically fit for military service, he probably would have continued in the law office as he liked the work, and was well-liked by his boss. His future likely would have been quite different except for this turn of events. His talents were probably more suited to the business world than to farming. In later years, serving on the Municipal Council was an experience that he enjoyed.

While working in the lawyer's office, he got better acquainted with Agnes Austring, a high-school student whom he had met when her family visited his family on the farm.

The Austring family had come from *Austringen*, a fishing cove on the Vesteralen Islands in northern Norway, not too far from where the Nelson (Olson) family had lived. Living right by the ocean, boats and fishing were a big part of their lives. They went to church by boat as the church was on another small island. Johan Johnson, Agnes's father owned a store at the seaside but it didn't provide enough income for their livelihood. To get more money to feed the family, he and his sons also had to fish. The land on that island, too, was not suited for farming. Sheep and goats could graze on it, but that was about all. Since it was so difficult to make a living there, when an uncle in North Dakota offered to send tickets to the father and two oldest sons, they accepted. They left Norway in the summer of 1902 and spent the first few weeks in North Dakota helping with the haying. Compared to the coolness of northern Norway, they found the heat oppressing.

By 1904, they had worked at various jobs—enough to repay their uncle and to purchase tickets for the mother and the remaining six siblings to come to America. The family was booked to come on the steamship *Norge*. Johan had asked Petra (mother) to bring a certain variety of seed potatoes with them from Norway and they had to delay their departure until they could procure those potatoes. They later thanked God for His protection and guidance as missing the ship *Norge* probably saved their lives. That ship was wrecked on some islands just west of England and many passengers were lost.

The family had left *Austringen* behind and had started a new life. But they took the name of their old home to America as they changed the family name from Johnson to Austring. It seems that there were too many Johnsons in this country already! Agnes was seven years old when they came and never forgot the difficult trip across the ocean—especially the sea-sickness. For that reason, she never had any desire to go back. (However, more than sixty years later, in 1970, she and Jacob made a trip to their old homes by jet airplane. She celebrated her 73rd birthday at her birthplace.)

They lived in Clifford, North Dakota from 1904 until 1907, farming rented land. In 1907, the family rented two railroad cars and loaded horses, cattle, machinery and household goods into those cars and traveled to Canada where the oldest son had gone two years previously and filed on homestead land. The house had already been built near Stewart Valley, Saskatchewan. Farming kept them busy and they were soon involved in the life of their new community, helping to build a school and a church.

Agnes attended school in her home district, and later was able to enroll in a teacher's training course in Swift Current. She taught school before and after she was married. She and Jacob were married on July 7, 1917. They lived with Jacob's parents for five months until they got their first homestead house built—a two room 12' x 24' house. Their first years were difficult with a succession of crop failures. When they finally had a good crop and were looking forward to harvesting it, a hail storm destroyed the whole crop—and their dreams for that year. Agnes had to go back to teaching for awhile. After six years in their two roomed homestead house, they moved to Jacob's parents' farm for one winter, then rented a cousin's farm for three years. In 1926, they were able to purchase the farm they lived on for the rest of their farming years. The house was



*Jacob and Agnes Nelson*

small—only three rooms, and by this time there were six children, the oldest being only eight years old.

More than being concerned about providing physically for their family, Jacob and Agnes were committed to guiding their nine children spiritually. Early in their marriage they had taken Acts 19:31 as their motto:

*Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.*



## 20. *Life on the Farm*

The farm home of Jacob and Agnes Nelson was a busy place on October 26, 1927. The threshing crew was busy threshing the wheat that two to three weeks before had been cut and bound into bundles by a binder, and set up in “stooks” to dry. The crew consisted of ten to twelve men as it took several horse-drawn hay racks to keep the wheat bundles coming steadily to the threshing machine. This crew went from farm to farm, working as long as it took to get all the grain threshed. They had to be fed, of course, so (Agnes) Mom and some of her neighbors prepared huge feasts during those harvest days. The farmers were always eager to get all the threshing done before winter set in, but that day they lost the race. It started to snow and the threshing came to a halt. It was into that scene that I was born that October day. Since I, like my older siblings, was born at home, perhaps it was fortunate for Mom that the threshing crew had to leave. I always loved the harvest season on the farm, and maybe it was because I was born into it.

This was the farm home twenty-five miles south west of Swift Current, Saskatchewan—the farm that my parents had purchased in 1926. I was their eighth child. Jim, Oscar, Ralph, Inez and Mildred had been born when the folks lived in their small homestead house. Oscar died from pneumonia when he was only four years old. After they moved to Dad’s cousin’s farm, Ruby Olivia and Doris were born. So when I was born my mother was 30 years old and had seven children under the age of ten. I’ve always appreciated the fact that even under those conditions, they named me “Grace.” The farm-home that they had just purchased had only three rooms, rather crowded to



*Painting of Nelson farm west of village of Blumenhof—Section 20, Township 12, Range 14, West of 3rd Meridian, Saskatchewan, Canada.*

say the least. There was a bed in the living room, and a smaller bed in the corner of my parents' room. The boys slept on a "davenet"—a fold up bed in the kitchen. In the summer time, the boys camped in a room in a granary, and the older sisters had a bed in a "wash-house" (a small shed where the laundry was done). Another sister, Joyce joined the family in 1929. In the late summer of 1931, our sister Ruby Olivia died at the age of six and a half, after a bout of rheumatic fever. Two years after her death Ruby Constance was born, and then my mother had a bit of a rest until 1939 when our youngest sister, RoseAline completed the family. That was also the year that they enlarged the house.

Even though they had to struggle to make a living, they always thanked the Lord for providing what they needed. Jacob would haul a load of wheat to Blumenhof and break even on a load of coal that he would haul home for heating for the winter. He would take wheat to the mill in Swift Current and bring home a year's supply of flour and cereal. The garden and cattle and poultry provided the rest of the food. They didn't have any luxuries, but didn't feel poor as they had what they needed to live, even though it required a lot of hard work. Later on, they sold butter, eggs, and chickens to customers in Swift Current. In 1939, they were finally able to pay the debt and receive the title for the farm, though they still had another loan. Thus they were able to make long awaited improvements on the house, and enlarge it.

In spite of growing up in a large family, and the babies were delivered at home, we were never taught anything about "the birds and the bees." In those days, that was a subject that was rarely addressed. When my sister, Ruby was born, I was almost six years old and completely unaware of an impending birth. As was usual when a baby was born, we younger siblings were taken to our uncle and aunt's house to spend the day—to get us out of the way. Later in the day, Dad came to bring us home, and also brought the news that a new baby had arrived at our house that day. My immediate response was, "Well, it's a good thing Mamma stayed home!"

I believe my earliest childhood memory was of my sister Ruby's death. I was not quite four at the time, but I have a faint recollection of standing at the foot of the iron-frame bed as Mom and Dad sat with Ruby. I seem to remember that everyone else in the room was crying, but I was not—I suppose I didn't understand. I don't remember much else of those early years before I started school, except that I was generally happy. I was a "homebody"—I would get very homesick if I stayed overnight at some other home. Our



*Jacob and Agnes Nelson Family—1936*

BACK ROW: Doris, Mildred, Jim, Ralph, Inez FRONT ROW: Joyce, Jacob, Ruby, Agnes, Grace

cousins lived only a mile and a half from us and we would often stay at each other's homes. Invariably, I would end up with a stomach ache—which was very real. My aunt would hold me on her lap and read to me to comfort me.

Our first language was Norwegian. My oldest brother couldn't speak English when he started school, but learned quickly. As more of the children went to school, more and more English was spoken at home. Gradually it became a situation where when my folks spoke to us in Norwegian, we would answer them in English. Later, when I was in my teens, Grandpa and Grandma Austrang lived with us for some years, and as they spoke little English, we had a chance to brush up on our Norwegian again.

I started school shortly before I was six years old. We went to Cedar Hill School, a one-room country school, and were usually blessed with good teachers. I was in a rather large class compared to most classes in a one-room school that has all the grades. My class was usually about seven or eight students, and I was the only girl most of the time. Another girl started school with me, but she died before the first year was over. We lived a mile and a half from school and almost always walked. In the winter time, we went by horse and sleigh—a large box sleigh pulled by our two horses, Prince and Pete. Since there were always other teams of horses hauling other students, a barn was on the school property to keep the horses in during the day. At the end of a school day, we would have a hard time holding the horses back on their homeward trip.

The school became the center for social activities. The annual Christmas program, put on by the teacher and students was the highlight—and the whole community attended. In the spring, Field Day, which involved several other schools was the biggest sports event of the year. At the end of the school year, the school picnic was held at Lac Pelletier, another big community event.

In the winter time, we often had sleigh riding parties with our closest neighbors. Since there was a *coulee* between our home and theirs, we would meet on one of the slopes with our sleighs and toboggans and have a great time. Sometimes we would go to the lake, or find a frozen slough and have skating parties.

Rural electrification had not reached our district yet, so we depended on kerosene lamps for light in the evenings. Then a better lamp was made available—one that used gasoline, and had fragile mantles that gave a much brighter light. It sounds dangerous, but I don't remember that there were ever any accidents. It wasn't until the 1940's that we were able to get a motorized washing machine. Clothes were ironed with "sad irons" until gas irons became available. A coal burning heater heated our house, and Mom cooked on a coal burning kitchen range. There were no telephones either, so when we needed to communicate with neighbors, we would walk to their homes.

I remember something of the depression years of the 1930's even though I was very young at the time. Rain was so scarce, and dust storms were a common occurrence. There were times when it was almost dark enough for lamps in the middle of the day. When the rains finally returned, we were overjoyed to have puddles to play in. Somehow we managed to have enough food, though there was a time when we were very happy to receive apples that the government distributed to the hard hit areas. Dad prided himself in the fact that they "did not have to go on relief."

Since we lived quite a distance from a High School, and there were no school buses at that time, most of us in our family took our High School by correspondence. Until I reached High School, I had always enjoyed strong competition in my class—one of the boys was a better student than the others and he and I always worked hard to gain the position of "first in class." The whole community watched this competition, especially at final exam time, to see who was going to be first. We were always very close. Until we got into High School—then he left me behind. He won a scholarship after he wrote his Grade XI exams and went away to a college. He continued winning scholarships, and



*Grace at age 18*

went on eventually to get a doctorate in nuclear physics and taught at a university in Brazil. His record spoke well for our little rural school.

When we took our High School courses by correspondence, we were only supposed to take four subjects a year, instead of the usual eight. But since there was usually a sibling who had taken the courses the year before, we would apply for the four we were allowed to take, then study the others on our own using the courses a sibling had used the previous year. At the end of June, we would take the Department of Education's standard examinations in all eight subjects. It was one way of getting through, but in my case at least, the grades suffered. I cannot boast about the grades that my High School transcripts show. I finished High School in the summer of 1945.

Besides going to school, we also helped with the work on the farm. Besides the grain farming, we had cattle, pigs, a few sheep, chickens, and sometimes turkeys.

We also had a large garden. We all helped with the work, both outside and in the house, and there was always lots to do. I always preferred the inside work. Even though Mom had hired help in the early years, as her seven daughters grew up she didn't need outside help. Since our two brothers were the oldest in the family, they left home early in my life, so we had to help with the chores and other farm work. Dad had made a deal with my oldest brother, Jim, that when he finished Grade eight, he could choose a young heifer from the herd of cattle, and from then on the calves born to that cow would be Jim's to sell when they were marketed. When he made that deal, he didn't realize that the eight siblings following Jim would remember and hold him to that promise when they passed Grade eight. Sometimes when he took a truck load of cattle to the market, he found that only a portion of the profit was his own. Actually, he didn't begrudge us that share in the farming because it helped to increase our interest in that phase of the farm, and also gave us some good lessons in economics. Not only did we receive the profits when one of our calves was sold, we also had to bear the loss if anything happened so that there was nothing to market. We used the money we made for our education after we finished high-school.

## 21. *Early Influences, Education, Teaching*

The farm community where we lived was quite a mixture of different ethnic backgrounds. To the south of us, there was a French-Canadian settlement who had their own school and church. Eight miles to the east was the small village of Blumenhof where we got our mail and shopped for necessities, and hauled the grain to the elevators in the fall. This was our closest train station—a branch line from Swift Current that had a train come twice a week. The people in this area were mainly Mennonites, immigrants from Germany. Closer to our farm was another group of immigrants from the Ukraine. They attended the Cedar Hill school with a few students of English and Scottish backgrounds—and the rest of us were the Norwegian families. The Mennonites had their own churches, but in our Cedar Hill district, there was no church. Some time after the Nelsons had started farming in this community, a Lutheran Brethren congregation had been organized and meetings were held in the homes. However, there weren't enough families to continue that ministry, so after some years, it was discontinued. One of the members had contributed some land for a cemetery, and many of the pioneers of the community were buried there. The Ladies' Aid organization did keep going for many years and later became known as the Cedar Hill Ladies' Aid and included women of several different church backgrounds.

A Lutheran Free Church pastor from my mother's home church near Stewart Valley came periodically to have baptisms, instruct young people for confirmation, and sometimes to conduct funerals. Since I was born late in the fall—and winter arrived at that time—the chances of the pastor coming before the following spring were slim. I was told that when I was less than two months old, the family attended a Christmas program at school, and a lady who had played with me there later came down with small pox. Because of the fear that I might get the disease, the folks decided that I should be baptized soon, so an elder of the small congregation baptized me at our home on December 11th, 1927. Dad's cousin and wife were my sponsors.

I have some recollection of the "home meetings" which at first were conducted in Norwegian—maybe that was why the meetings always seemed so long to me. Later, the school was used for services whenever a visiting pastor or missionary came. As time went on, we started a "Young People's" organization, and had meetings every other Sunday afternoon, with everyone taking part in the program. Eventually, through some German Lutherans in the neighboring school district, a Missouri Synod pastor started having services in our school twice a month—thus alternating with our "Young People's" meeting. One of these Missouri Synod pastors, Rev. Miller, had a great impact on my spiritual growth. He started having Sunday School sessions after the service, and one summer had Vacation Bible School. I had heard many sermons and talks by visiting preachers, and had also attended Bible Camp in my mother's home district. All of these had influenced me, and with the teachings of my parents, I had a good understanding of the gospel. But as I look back, it was Rev. Miller's teaching about the forgiveness of sins



*Nelson Trio—Grace, Joyce and Doris at LCBI*

at one session of the Vacation Bible School that stands out as a milestone in my faith life.

After I finished High School in 1945, I enrolled at the Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute (later became the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute) and studied there for two years. This became a very significant experience in my spiritual growth as I had opportunity to study the Bible and also learn more about the Lutheran Church. While growing up, we had often gone to inter-denominational meetings and were exposed to some non-Lutheran teachings. But since Dad and Mom were strong in their convictions with regard to Lutheran doctrine, we often had “theological discussion” at home which helped us to understand the differences. There were five of us sisters who attended LCBI, and we eventually joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our folks were loyal to the Lutheran Brethren synod, but since there was no congregation of that synod in our area, we decided to join the church that was available to us. Our home church was St. Olaf’s Lutheran Church in

Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

I studied at LCBI until the spring of 1947. At that time, they offered a three year Bible course of two terms each year. During my second year there, they added a third term in the spring so students could finish in two years. I didn’t stay for the spring term as I felt the folks needed help on the farm (I did have enough credits so that I was able to go back for the spring term in 1950 and graduate). But in the meantime, I had decided that I needed to plan for a profession or some kind of employment.

After the war, there was a great shortage of school teachers. In order to supply more schools with teachers, the Department of Education offered an eight-week course at the Normal Schools (Teachers’ Colleges) during the months of July and August. I took that course at the Moose Jaw Normal School and was given a Temporary Teaching Certificate so I could teach for one year. The fees for that course were \$25. At the end of that summer, I was hired by the Davidson School Unit to teach at a one-room country school, Sunrise School near Hanley, Saskatchewan. I had only nine students, but five grades—Grades 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8. Teachers who took the regular teachers’ training course would have a period of practise teaching in a school, supervised by an experienced teacher. After only eight weeks of courses, I felt very inadequate, and I was “practise teaching” entirely on my own. I really felt sorry for my students. However, we got through it, and that year of teaching taught me much more than what I had learned during the eight weeks of training the summer before.

My salary for that first year was \$1100—per year. Out of my monthly check of \$100, I paid \$35 for room and board. When I started teaching, I didn’t own a wrist watch, so carried an alarm clock with me to school. After receiving my second check, I purchased a wrist watch—for \$46.99. After almost fifty years, it still runs.

Before the end of the school year in 1948, plans were being made for the Luther League Convention in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Doris, Joyce and I had done a lot of singing together and now, the *Nelson Trio* was asked to sing at that convention. I was scheduled to go back for the second summer course at the Normal School, but I really wanted to attend that Convention—and have the summer off. I wrote to the Department of Education and asked if my temporary teaching certificate could be extended for another year. At the end of June the reply came and I was told that since there was still a great shortage of teachers, my certificate would be extended.

Besides the week that was spent for traveling and being at the Convention, I also taught Vacation Bible School for one week at a church about thirty miles from home. I helped on the farm for most of the remainder of the summer, and returned to Sunrise School the end of August. My salary was raised to \$1250 a year. I enjoyed living in that community—I boarded at Harry and Viola Johnson's home, and we became very close friends. My second year there was even busier than the first—the teaching was easier as I had a year's experience. I did have an extra primary grade as I had two new beginners. Besides my teaching, I was taking a University course by correspondence. In order to qualify for a Permanent Teaching Certificate, in addition to the teacher training at the Normal School, I had to complete three University courses, and have two years of experience. I knew that I had two summer sessions of Normal School to finish, so I wanted to get started with the other courses. I took English X2 that year, and enjoyed it even though it kept me very busy. Social activities in the Sunrise community also kept me occupied, and I was close enough to Outlook (LCBI) to go there for week-ends to visit my sisters Doris and Joyce. For the summers of 1949 and 1950, I was back at the Normal School's summer sessions, and received my Interim First Class Certificate.

My third year of teaching was at another country school closer to home. It was in the Beaver Flat district, near where my mother grew up. At that school, I had sixteen students. Again, I boarded at the home of two of my students. We had a very hard winter that year and missed several days of school because of the cold and storms. More than once, I walked to school—about two miles—when it was 25—35 degrees below zero. Usually, I was able to get a ride with parents who took their children to school. I had asked to be released from my contract after the winter term in order to go back to LCBI and was fortunate that another teacher did become available so from April to June of 1950, I was a student again.

My next position was as teacher of the Junior room at Hallonquist, a small town south east of Swift Current, where I taught thirty students in Grades one through six. The most difficult part of that position was keeping a good working relationship with the older lady who was the teacher of the Senior room. Since by then I had acquired the Interim Teaching Certificate, my salary had gone up to \$1500. I rented a room in the home of the lady who ran the telephone switch board, so I was always kept up to date on the latest neighborhood news. I shared her kitchen-dining area and did my own cooking. My rent was \$15 a month. That year, I took another University course by correspondence—Psychology X1. It was a busy year as I often went home for week-ends, or to Swift Current for various events. As I didn't have a car, I traveled on the branch railway line out of Swift Current, or the folks came to give me a ride home. During the summer of 1951, I completed the requirements for the Permanent First Class Certificate by taking an Education course at a summer session at the University of Saskatchewan.

I preferred teaching the primary grades, so in the fall of 1951, I acquired the position of teaching Grades one to three in a three-room school in McMahon, about twenty-five miles from home. I had that position for two years. The first year I boarded for two months in a home where German was the first language—and later regretted that I hadn't taken



*Teaching Primary class (Grades 1-3)  
MacMahon, Saskatchewan 1951-53*

advantage of the situation and studied German. When a small house in their yard became available, I lived there for the rest of the year. Again I had about a mile to walk to school. The second year, the “teacherage” on the school property became available and with sufficient space, one of my cousins stayed with me and attended High School. It was a fun year as the other two teachers were young men—younger than I.

It took about five years before I could say that I really liked teaching. The first couple of years had been difficult, but with more training and experience, and pleasant teaching situations, I was enjoying my work. The Superintendent of schools in each of the School Units where I taught visited the schools about twice a year, and I received favorable reports. I also felt that the Lord had led me into this work, and that it was a “calling” where I could serve Him. I was enjoying life in general, with many friends and plenty of enjoyable activities outside of school. So why did I leave this profession after six years and go to LBI in Minneapolis to take the mission course?



*Schoolteacher shopping in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.—fall*



## 22. *The Call to Japan*

During the time that we were growing up, we had often heard missionaries speak—at services in our community by visiting missionaries, or at conferences at a near-by inter-denominational Bible School, or at Bible Camps. I always found their stories interesting. I had the impression that the call to be a missionary was a very important one—but I sort of hoped that I would not be called—especially to Africa because I had such a fear of snakes. (Missionaries from Africa usually had some snake stories!) But I prayed that the Lord would lead me, and that I would know what I should do. In the late 1940's, my sister Doris had taken the Mission Course at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis because she thought the Lord was leading her into foreign mission work. After taking the course, the mission board advised her to take nurses training in preparation for that work. She encouraged me to take the Mission course, also. I hesitated because I didn't know if I had "the call." In the spring of 1953, I wrote to the Mission Director at LBI and told him of my interest in the course, but also of my uncertainty. In his reply, Dr. Gronli encouraged me to come and take the course and perhaps I would be given some guidance as to what to do next. My secret thoughts were that in this way, I could show the Lord that I was at least willing—and then maybe I could go back to teaching. I applied and was accepted so at the end of June, I put away my school books, and spent most of the summer on the farm with my family—at that time, Dad and Mom and my two youngest sisters, Ruby and RoseAline.

In September, I traveled by train from Swift Current to Moose Jaw, then boarded the Soo Line which went directly to Minneapolis. Since this was the first time that I was going so far alone (and to a "foreign" country!) I was glad to have Mom go with me. In North Dakota, other students headed for LBI got on the same train, which helped to make me feel less alone. After I found LBI and my room, Mom left to visit relatives before returning to Canada.

I had a very good year at LBI. The classes were inspirational and informative, and we in our small group in the mission course became very close friends. My room-mate, Marlyse Johnson and I hit it off right away, and that friendship continues to this day. It took a little adjusting to get used to dorm life again. After six years of being the "school teacher" and telling others what to do, it was a bit of a shock to be told that I had to be in my room after a certain hour. But I enjoyed the year in the dorm, and all the extra activities that go along with school life. As a Canadian, I had to get special permission to work part-time at the school. My job was to correct papers for one of the Bible Department teachers. Besides the monetary help that job gave me, it was an enriching experience as it was almost like auditing those courses. During school vacations, I was able to spend the time with my brother Jim and Helen and sister Inez and Elvin in Iowa, and Ralph and Miriam in Missouri.

As the year went on, I realized that I would soon have to make a decision about what I was to do in the future. Some of my classmates were beginning to apply to mission

boards, and others in the class were missionaries on furlough, so the challenge of foreign missions was always present. But I was still uncertain as to whether or not I had “the call.” I was praying for guidance everyday. Should I apply to the mission board? Or should I look into some other field of service? In the chapel services, many different areas of service were often presented—and they were all challenging. Or should I go back to teaching?

I finally decided to go and talk with the president of LBI, Dr. Oscar Hanson. I explained to him that I had an interest in foreign missions, and had come to take the mission course, but now I was still uncertain about “the call” and whether or not I should apply to the Board of Foreign Missions. He looked at me sternly and asked me only one question: “What are you waiting for?”

I had read an article about discerning God’s will for our lives, and the writer had said that often all we need is “to do the next thing.” I knew then that it was up to me to take the next step and make application to the Board. I met with the Board of Foreign Missions on February 24, 1954. My sister, Doris had finished her nurses training and had applied and she also met with the board during their meeting that week. I had stated on my application that I didn’t have any particular country in mind, though I thought it would be Africa. Since it was quite certain that as a nurse Doris would be called to Africa, we were beginning to think of the advantages of going to the same country. The letter from Dr. Syrdal came a few days later:

I am very happy to inform you that the Board of Foreign Missions decided yesterday to call you to serve as our missionary in Japan. I realize that you had thought of your service in terms of another country. When we have thought of other areas of the world it may be some adjustment to us to think in terms of a new area but I hope that you will consider the possibilities in Japan today and that you will face it in light of the great need that we have there.

Two years ago we were in hopes of sending six young women to Japan and sent only two. Last year we were in hopes of sending ten and found only one available. This year we have no one but you available to date. Meanwhile there are two of our young women in Japan that had started working there that have had to return to this country for health reasons. That will indicate something of the need for personnel in that country.

The situation in Japan is favorable to mission work at the present time. They do not come by the thousands or even by the dozens but they do come one by one. People are ready to listen and this is especially true of young student groups and young married people. The Lutheran Radio Hour is reaching people by the millions and thousands of people are studying the Bible through the correspondence courses started and conducted by the Lutheran Hour. Through these contacts we have found many people that have open hearts to inquiry into the Gospel message. We have also been able to enter into schools and institutions directly with a full Gospel program. The evangelistic work in this area is with smaller groups, individuals, and especially in Bible study and discussion groups with young people. We hope that it will be possible for you to accept this call and that God will richly bless you as you consider it with a willingness to serve wherever He calls.

Maybe I was still waiting for some bright light or something to hit me and let me know that this was my “call.” However, I was learning that the Lord leads each person in

different ways—and step by step. He has given us a mind to think and plan, and often we just have to figure things out for ourselves. As I took one step, the next step would be shown. I was learning “to do the next thing.” After two weeks, I sent my reply to the Board:

*For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*  
Proverbs 3:26. I am very happy to accept the call extended to me by the Board of Foreign Missions to serve in Japan..... This I can do because “the Lord is my confidence” and He has given me the assurance that this is His will.

By God’s grace, I will carry out the requirements of this call, and trust that the Lord will use me to the furtherance of His kingdom....

The rest of the school year was exciting as several from our mission class were making preparations to go out as missionaries. Bessie Salter was also called to Japan—as was Evelyn Tuff, a second year student in the Bible Department. I was informed that Gethsemane Lutheran Church in north Minneapolis would sponsor me, thus I made a couple of visits to that congregation. I also had a complete physical examination at a clinic recommended by the Mission Office. Those of us who were going out that summer were requested to write an article about ourselves for *The Missionary*, the publication of the Mission office. All new missionaries were invited to Dr. Syrdal’s home one evening for fellowship and discussion about work and travel. There we met the couples who were also going to Japan—the pastors who were just finishing Seminary. We graduated the end of May and I soon returned to Saskatchewan, again traveling on the Soo line from Minneapolis.

The summer was busy with preparations for leaving for Japan. The Mission Office had sent out a list of outfit suggestions and with that in mind, I did a lot of shopping. Doris, who had been called to South Africa, would not be leaving until later in the fall and in the meantime, she was working at the hospital in Swift Current. My sister Joyce’s wedding date was set for July 17, and since the whole family would be home for that occasion, Doris and I decided—with Joyce and Lloyd’s approval—to have our commissioning service the day following the wedding. Since St. Olaf Lutheran Church at that time had a very small building, the commissioning service was held in a school auditorium. Dr. George Evenson, who had been the president of LCBI when we were students there was the commissioner. Our two brothers, Jim and Ralph sang a duet—and Dad gave a greeting. As Dad and Mom had always had a concern for missions, they never objected to our decision to go, but they would have been more at ease if we had been going together to the same country. Sending two single daughters to the far corners of the earth—and to opposite corners—was a test of their faith and trust. In his greeting, Dad said that he had always been interested in missions but he couldn’t go himself. “So I’ll just have to say, ‘Here am I, Lord, send my girls.’”

The commissioning service had been on Sunday afternoon, and that evening, we showed the movie *Suzuki* at our church. That gave me and my family and friends a bit of an introduction to our mission work in Japan.

Family members who had come from a distance for the wedding and commissioning started leaving soon after these occasions. The farewells were not easy as I was leaving for six years. My last week at home was busy with packing—when I finished, I had four trunks. They were shipped to San Francisco to be put on the ship that I would be sailing on for Japan. Even though this was all very exciting, and I was looking forward to going, this home-loving girl was showing some emotional stress the last few days at home. I was irritable when packing didn’t go smoothly—even towards Mom who tried so hard



**DORIS NELSON**

For the first time in the history of our church in Canada, two sisters have been commissioned for foreign missionary service, Doris Nelson to Zululand, and Grace Nelson to Japan. The commissioning service was held on Sunday afternoon, July 18, at Swift Current, Sask., under the auspices of St. Olaf congregation, in which the missionary candidates presently hold their membership. The commissioner was Pastor G. O. Evenson. Others who took part in the commissioning service were pastors O. H. Olsen, N. A. Salte and E. K. Rostad; and Mr. G. Loken and Mr. J. A. Nelson. A duet was sung by the Nelson brothers, as well as by the missionary candidates. The latter gave challenging testimonies of their con-



**GRACE NELSON**

fidence in Him who had called them into the special service which they were now entering. Missionary Mabel Nostbakken, home on furlough from our Sudan Mission, brought a greeting.

The Nelson sisters, whose parental home is at Blumenhof, Sask., are both graduates of LCBI, Outlook, and of the Mission course at LBI, Minneapolis. Doris is a registered nurse, and Grace an experienced public school teacher. They count on their friends back home to uphold them in prayer for them in their respective places of service. Grace sails early in August for Japan, while Doris is scheduled to leave for Zululand in October. May God grant them safe journeys, and much joy in His service.

to help me. On my last day at home, Mom prepared some of my favorite food—her baked creamed chicken and lemon meringue pie. I was so filled with emotion and I knew if I tried to tell her how much I appreciated it, I would break down—so I didn't say anything. Since I still had several hours before I would board the train for Vancouver, I had to be in control for awhile yet. We drove in to Swift Current and visited with other family members at Doris and Ruby's apartment until the time of departure. It was close to midnight on July 28 when I said "Good-bye" to Dad and Mom, four of my sisters and other relatives and friends who came to see me off. I guess it was most difficult for Mom, and seeing her cry made it really difficult for me. As I left, the group on the station platform joined in singing:

There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave:  
Send the light! Send the light!  
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save;

Send the light! Send the light!  
Send the light! The blessed gospel light!  
Let it shine from shore to shore!  
Send the light and let its radiant beams  
Light the world forever more!"

As I found my way to my berth in the sleeper section of the train, the black porter noticed my tears and he was so sympathetic. He very kindly and gently helped me with my baggage and found my place. His very attitude was a comfort to me. As it was midnight, I soon settled into bed but I didn't sleep very well for the first couple of hours. Every time I closed my eyes, I could see my mother crying, and that would start my tears again. This time I had really left home. By the time the train reached Calgary in the morning, I was feeling much better. I had coffee in the depot in Calgary, then on the train again ate the lunch that Mom had sent with me. The trip through the Canadian Rockies was breath-taking—especially for this "prairie girl" who was seeing mountains for the first time.

I arrived in Vancouver on July 30 and my cousin Gwen met me. As we had a lot of relatives in the Vancouver area, I spent three days visiting—and meeting some cousins for the first time. The Canada District Luther League convention was on just at that time, and I was able to attend some of the sessions, and also gave a greeting to all before I left for San Francisco.

On Sunday evening, August 1, I boarded the train again and left Canada. In Portland, Oregon, I met Bessie Salter while changing trains. Together we enjoyed the rest of the trip to San Francisco on Southern Pacific's *Shasta Daylight*. We met Evie Tuff in Oakland and went with her to her sister's home in San Lorenzo where we spent two nights, then had our last night at *Hotel King George* in San Francisco. We were busy the two days before we sailed as we had to get our visas, check to see that our baggage was ready to be shipped, and have our tickets validated. I was able to visit Uncle Julian and cousin Julianne during the last day. While we were taking care of all of our business in San Francisco, Bessie and I had stopped at a restaurant for dinner and we were quite astounded at the high price—two dollars for a meal of pan-fried chicken! We went to a less expensive place and had ice-cream for dessert.

Boarding the *President Cleveland* on the afternoon of August 5, 1954 was a thrilling experience. Bessie, Evie and I remarked that it was a miracle that we were leaving for Japan together—a year earlier, we hadn't even met. My cousin Julianne and her family were there to see me off and gave me a gardenia corsage. Bessie and Evie also had relatives and friends bidding them farewell so we each had someone to hold the other end of the ribbon as the ship pulled out from the pier. What excitement! I guess I felt glad that no close family members were there, so there was no sadness in leaving—just excitement. Letters and telegrams from my family assured me that they were all with me in thoughts and prayers. The ship left at 4 p.m. and we stayed up on deck until we had passed under the Golden Gate Bridge, then went to our stateroom. Beautiful bouquets of flowers from friends had been delivered, which made the occasion even more festive. We spent our first hour reading the many letters that were waiting for us in our stateroom. However, about two hours into our ocean trip, misery started to replace the happiness we had felt. Bessie and I started taking turns at the sink. Evie proved to be a better sailor so she was all set to go to the dining room for dinner. I tried to accompany her, but just as the waiter brought my meal, I had to dash. Bessie and I went right to our bunks and didn't even get undressed. We had taken pills for sea-sickness before we left, and got some more from our steward, but apparently they hadn't taken effect. My only thought was, "How am I going to bear two weeks of this?" But by the next morning, we felt fine

and were relieved to hear that the ocean is usually rough when the ship first leaves—as it gets farther out, it is much calmer. My first time to even see the ocean and now I was going to be on it for two weeks!

On our first full day on the ship, we started getting acquainted with the other missionaries in our group. Harold and Ruth Aasland were kept busy with their three-month old twins, Barbara and Beverly. Harold and Dalene Eimon, and Norman and Joanne Neumann had just recently been married so this was somewhat of a honeymoon trip for them. Einar and Luella Unseth and little son, Nathan, were not on the ship as they were flying from Alaska. There were several other missionaries on board, too. Lester Dahlsens of the Lutheran Free Church were on their way to Formosa (Taiwan), and there were some Presbyterians and many Baptists. We all met together each day for prayer, and on Sundays, missionaries were in charge of the morning worship.

We spent August 10—the whole day, in Honolulu. The ship docked at 8 a.m. and we were met by Pastor Gjervick who had just started work for the ELC in Honolulu. As the Gjervicks lived near Waikiki Beach, we enjoyed swimming at that popular place. Pastor Gjervick and a Chaplain from the submarine base took us sightseeing in the afternoon, and back to the ship by 9:30 p.m. It had been good to walk on solid ground again, and not have the floor come up to meet your feet as you walk. When we reached our stateroom after another big send-off with the paper streamers and all, there was a beautiful bouquet of Hawaiian flowers that Doris and Ruby had ordered for me.

Meals on the ship were fabulous, so we had to concentrate on getting some exercise to work it off. We often went swimming in the ship's pool, and walked around the deck as much as we could. As we got closer to Japan, the weather was getting warmer. We were due to arrive on August 19, but as we approached Japan, the ocean was getting rougher and the wind stronger. We heard that Typhoon *Grace* was passing through, so we weren't able to dock on the day planned, but rather anchored in the harbor and waited until the typhoon had passed. That was a pleasant day on the ship as it sat stable in the water and we didn't experience the sea-sickness that we had been battling for a couple of days on rough seas before arriving in Japan.



*Grace, Evie Tuff & Bessie Salter enroute to Japan aboard the President Cleveland*

## 23. *Experiences in a New Culture*

Setting foot in Japan on that morning of August 20, 1954 was an unforgettable experience. I had very little knowledge about this country where I would be living for many years to come. I had no idea of what to expect. The areas around the piers where ships arrive and depart are not noted for eye-catching scenery, and as that was what we saw first, my first impressions were not very positive. Everything looked grey and dingy—in contrast to our luxurious two weeks on the *President Cleveland*. It was hot and muggy and crowds of people everywhere. I wondered if I would ever be able to adjust to living in this country. I did not share the exuberant joy of one of the other newly-arrived missionaries when he exclaimed: “Isn’t this exciting? I just love it already!”

Several of the missionaries in Japan met us at the ship that morning and welcomed us warmly to our new country and to the mission family. After clearing customs, we went by train to Tokyo to the Maruyama Cho missionary residence. John Homerstad, our Mission Superintendent, led in a devotional time and welcomed the new missionaries before we all had lunch together. We stayed at this residence the first couple of days where we were well taken care of by Bernice Boyum. One afternoon, Lydia Hanson guided us on our first trip to downtown Tokyo. My first impressions of the crowds in Japan were reinforced during this trip as it seemed that there were cars, bicycles, and people going every direction at once. The traffic and noise was something that I had never experienced before.

John Homerstad invited some of us to go to Lake Nojiri where he and his family and many other missionaries were vacationing. Evie Tuff and I accepted the invitation and traveled with John on the train. For newcomers to Japan, that was another learning experience as we got a glimpse of rural Japan and some of the customs of the people. The trains at that time were not what would be described as luxurious, and certainly not air-conditioned. We went through thirty tunnels on that trip and through the longer ones, we had to close the windows to keep the smoke out. We had our first taste of Japanese food when we ate Japanese rolls and fruit on the train. We stayed with the Homerstad’s at cabin #93—they were renting from the Olaf Hansens that summer. We were invited out for meals at the cabins of others from our mission which gave us a good chance to begin to know some of them. We were already getting a sense of the close bond amongst members of the mission family. One evening we went with all the other missionaries across the lake to the *Nojiri Ko Hotel* for *sukiyaki*. It cost us ¥300 each—at that time, less than a dollar. After an enjoyable week at the lake, we returned to Tokyo.

Our mission had rented a large house from the Southern Baptist mission. There was a kindergarten run by the Baptists on this same compound, and a small apartment in the kindergarten building. Evie and I were assigned to live in this apartment. The Aaslands and Unseths lived in the big house which had been divided into two apartments. There was an extra room in the big house which was to be our living room—where we could entertain guests or study with a tutor. Our rooms were Japanese style with *tatami* floors

and sliding *shoji* doors. We appreciated living close to Aaslands and Unseths who were like our own family during our first year away from our families in America.

The mission basic salary for single women at that time was \$1600 per year. Since prices in Japan were so low, we had no difficulty living on that amount. The exchange rate was ¥360 to the dollar, which was also to our advantage. Travel was very inexpensive—the smallest taxi charged ¥70 for the starting fare, and of course, trains were much cheaper than taxis. The four hour train trip to Shizuoka cost only ¥360.



*Studying Japanese with tutor Ken Ichiyama—Tokyo, 1954*

We started language school early in September. We studied at the Lutheran Center Language School, run by the Missouri Synod. We traveled by electric train, and had to transfer twice before arriving at Iidabashi, the station close to the school. The crowded trains did not make for pleasant traveling, so we started leaving for school at seven a.m. to avoid the worst crowds. To begin with, Evie and I depended on Harold Aasland and Einar Unseth to show us how to get to school, but it wasn't long before we were traveling anywhere in Tokyo by ourselves.

Studying Japanese reminded me of my teaching days when I had taught beginners—only now I was the beginner. It took me about as long to learn a new word as it did my beginners—and it probably took me longer to learn the alphabets. When I could finally read simple sentences in my Japanese text-book, I felt the same excitement that I had seen in my beginners when they had first learned to read. We had a tutor to help us with our studies each afternoon. We also each had a Bible Class—taught with an interpreter. Mine was in a Girls' High School.

In order to spend as much time as possible studying the language, we had a maid part-time. We paid her 50 yen per hour (about 15 cents) which was considered good wages for a maid. We did most of our own cooking and as we knew little about Japanese food, our diets were quite American. When we went to downtown Tokyo, we would usually eat at the Snack Bar in the Overseas Supply Store where we could get American hamburgers and banana splits. We heard stories about missionary children who were glad when their mothers were away and the maid would prepare certain Japanese dishes that their parents hadn't learned to like. We were rather slow in starting to use Japanese food because we knew little about it. We gradually learned to change our eating habits as we had opportunity to eat in situations outside our own home.

We usually went to the US Military Chapel Center for Sunday worship. This gave us opportunity to meet other missionaries who were studying the language, and also other Americans. It also allowed us to adjust to Japan in a more gradual way—most of the time we were “in Japan,” but on Sunday mornings, we felt like we were in the United States or Canada. As time went on, we started going to Japanese churches, too—as we learned the language. Near the end of September, all the new missionaries were asked to be at the church at Maruyama Cho to be introduced to the congregation. My first impression of a Japanese church was the lack of family groups—and I was to learn that many of the Japanese Christians stood alone in their faith. At the end of this service, the Japanese pastor introduced all the new missionaries. He had some difficulty with all the names and I thought that because of this, he became frustrated and forgot to introduce the wives. Another lesson that I was to learn—Japan was a man's world.



Our first year in Tokyo was very busy. Besides language study, we enjoyed the times we got together with the other missionaries. Every Friday evening, we met in one of the missionary homes for Bible Study, prayer, and fellowship. We thoroughly enjoyed these gatherings—as well as the special times at Christmas and for our conferences. We traveled to Shizuoka in October and celebrated Canadian Thanksgiving with Dan and Marie Vinge, and Lydia Hanson. Later that same month, we had our first experience in a Japanese hotel when we attended the All Lutheran Conference in Gifu. We sat on the floor for the conference sessions, and also for the meals, and slept on *futons* on the *tatami* floors. The meals were all Japanese food so this was really our introduction to Japanese culture—and we thought it was great.

We were able to learn more about Japan through the field trips that the language school planned for us. We visited the scenic Hakone and Nikko areas, a silk farm, and the Diet Building where we even sat in on a Diet session. Through our maids, or the students from our Bible classes, we learned a little about Japanese family life. One of our maids got married shortly after she quit working for us, and we were invited to her home to see her wedding kimono and other articles of her “trousseau.” We were often served Japanese green tea—the first time I was served was at the school where I taught a Bible Class. With the tea were some very delicate *omanju*—dumpling-like sweets filled with bean-paste. I enjoyed the tea, but I could not finish the sweets. The bean-paste just did not suit my taste, and the texture didn’t help. It took several occasions like this before I finally decided that I might as well learn to like it as it seemed that I was going to be offered these delicacies quite frequently. It wasn’t too many years later that *omanju* became some of my favorite snacks to enjoy with tea.

After our first Christmas in Tokyo, we traveled “down the field” and visited most of the other missionaries in their places of work. This took us as far as Nagoya and gave us a better idea of what the mission work was like and we also got better acquainted with the other missionaries. After those travels, we spent a week at our first Mission Conference at the Bible School in Shizuoka. We had a wonderful time of fellowship, and learned more about all that was involved in being a part of the ELC Mission. At that Conference, it was decided that I should move to Numazu in the summer after language school was finished. Andeline Arneson was living there alone after Marion Bringle had to return to the US for health reasons. Because it was felt that it was better to have two single women living together, I was to share the house where Andy lived and have my second year of language study with a tutor.

The first half of 1955 was filled with language study and many other activities in the mission. I found life to be very exciting—all the new experiences of life in Japan, and gradually getting involved in the work of missions. Although I had only one Bible Class in the Girls’ High School, I took that very seriously. When some of the girls objected to studying Christianity—they just wanted to study English—I insisted that I had not come to Japan to teach English but to share the gospel. That explanation and attitude changed considerably over the years—though my ultimate purpose remained the same. I sometimes helped with the Youth Fellowship meetings at the Maruyama Cho church on Saturday afternoons and took some of the students from my Bible Class to those gatherings. The language teacher who was also our afternoon tutor became interested in studying the Bible, so Evie and I struggled with our limited Japanese to witness to her. We were very enthusiastic about these opportunities which were the highlights of our lives during those months.

It was always a thrill when we could have Japanese guests in our home. We were eager to learn to know the Japanese people, and the girls who worked for us taught us much. We had about four different maids during that first year. They quit for various reasons—one had to return to her home to help, and one got married. Training a maid to do our

housework the way we wanted it done became quite a trial. Our maid was sprinkling our clothes one day in preparation for ironing them. We saw her fill her mouth with water—and one can guess the rest! They were usually very hard-working and we were thankful for the help they gave us as our schedules became busier.

Being so busy and enjoying all the new exciting experiences, I never experienced real home-sickness. There were times when I thought a lot about home and my family, but I was never lonely. Even Christmas was a happy occasion as we celebrated with our “family”—the Aaslands and Unseths. I wrote many long, detailed letters to my family at home—usually every week, and looked forward to the letters which came from home. Bessie Salter, who had come to Japan with us, had been assigned to take care of the missionary children who went to school in Tokyo. She had only four or five, but they were a lively group—who reminded us somewhat of our nephews and nieces at home. Her life, too, was very busy as she studied the language part time. Both Evie and Bessie were from North Dakota and we found that our backgrounds had much in common. We were amused one day when we heard an announcer on the Far East Network comment: “Do you ever get a longing for the wide open spaces?” What a question to ask these prairie lasses in the middle of Tokyo!

There were nine other single lady missionaries in the mission at that time, and we increased that number to twelve. Later it grew to fifteen. We had our own fellowship gatherings—whenever there was a fifth Monday in the month. We met at one of the homes, which involved quite a bit of traveling for some. The name of our group was GJAB MAR FEL—taking the first letter of each girl’s name. We had great times together, and this close friendship was to continue—even though some changed from single status to married.

Shortly after school was out in June, I packed up all my belongings and moved to Numazu. Evie also moved—to Shizuoka. I had just gotten nicely settled when we went to the Bible School in Shizuoka for our Mission’s summer conference. Much of the discussion at the conference was regarding the “indigenous” church—the self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating church, which reminded us of our goal as a mission in Japan. After that week, I spent a restful three weeks in Numazu, studying two hours a day, but mainly relaxing. During that time, Andy was told that she should return home as her health had been failing for some time. I helped her with some of her packing before she flew to the US, then I left for the cooler mountain areas. I spent two weeks in Karuizawa with some of the other single girls from our mission. We found the mountains, the trees, and the wonderful cool air so exhilarating while we attended two Missionary Conferences—one was the Evangelical Missionary Association of Japan, and the other was a Deeper Life conference. From there, we went on to Lake Nojiri for the last three weeks of our vacation. We had a tutor with us to help us with our language study two hours a day, but the rest of the time we enjoyed swimming, boating, picnicking, and visiting with the other missionaries. I took swimming lessons and learned how to swim. Our mission had built a duplex cabin for the single missionaries, which four of us rented (the two units) and enjoyed our summer home.

The Lutheran missionaries had a series of special meetings one week with Dr. Beil as the speaker. In visiting with the Beil’s, I mentioned that I had a brother living in Des Moines. Mrs. Beil asked for their address so they could invite them to come and see their slides of Japan. She also took a picture of me—to make it more personal for Ralph and Miriam (that picture became more significant a few years later). We were always eager to make connections with families at home.

My first task after returning from vacation was to move again. The Mission Executive Committee had met during the summer at the lake and had decided that I should move to Shizuoka and live with Anna Marie Mitchell rather than live alone in Numazu. Again

I packed up all my stuff and moved to the house on the Bible School campus where Anna Marie lived. The Hylands lived next door—they and Anna Marie were teachers at the Bible School. Moving in Japan involved more than just moving our belongings—we had to check out at the city hall or Ward office, and get our rice ration card changed. When we arrived at the new place, we had to register there.

Living near the Bible School was a very interesting experience—especially since Anna Marie was a teacher, and also the dean of girls. Every Tuesday evening, we ate supper with the students and I was happy for the opportunity to have Japanese meals, and also to spend time with the students. There were thirty students who kept the campus alive with their activity and singing. They all had to work part time to pay for their room and board at the school, and two of the girls worked for us. One of the young men became my tutor in the afternoons. I went to language school in the mornings—it was held at our church in Shizuoka. We were only three students—Evie and I and Einar Unseth. Einar and Luella had also moved to Shizuoka during the summer.

Besides language study, I helped with Sunday School in another church, and had a Bible Class for students at our house, and one in a Tuberculosis ward in a hospital. This class was started as the result of the witness of one of the patients who was a member of our church in Numazu. By the following spring, a young man who was a friend of one of the ladies in that ward started coming to the class. At one of the last classes, he expressed a desire to become a Christian and soon started instruction for baptism with Dan Vinge.

I had a wonderful year in Shizuoka. Our social life was mainly centered around activities with the other missionaries. Besides the Hylands next door, Dan and Marie Vinge were serving the main church in Shizuoka. Jean Wang worked with them, replacing Lydia Hanson who had gone back to Canada on furlough. Evie lived with Jean while continuing in language study. The Vorlands, who had been in Japan a year longer than we, lived in a large house that they shared with the Unseths. They were starting work in Kakegawa and waiting for their house to be built there. We had many “family” gatherings that year—including Canadian Thanksgiving at Vinge’s, and American Thanksgiving at Vorland’s. The Knutsons worked in Yaizu, which was close enough so they could join our fellowship quite often. The same was true for Roselyn Holte and Froydis Myhrwold, and the Davidsons who lived in Shimada. Norm and Nellie Olson were in Fuji City, and the Aamodts in Numazu. Our Shizuoka Ken fellowship became such a large group that we divided into two groups later. With so many young families in the mission, more children were added each year too, and by 1956, there were sixty MK’s (Missionary Kids).

Bernice Boyum was the first one of our missionaries to return from furlough—in March of 1956. She lived with us for three months as she replaced Anna Marie at the Bible School, after Anna Marie left for furlough the end of June.

As the Bible School at Furusho was situated out of the main city of Shizuoka, it had the feel of being out in the country. I rode my bike to language school at the church, and delighted in riding along roads that went past rice paddies—and often with Mount Fuji in view. We were also close enough to *mikan* orchards, so in the fall I had my first experience of *mikan gari*—going to pick mikans with the Bible School students on one of their outings.

In January of 1956, one year and five months after arriving in Japan, I gave my first Bible study in Japanese. Shortly after that, I gave the message at the chapel service at the Bible School. I wrote in a letter to my family that I had counted the number of hours I spent on preparation for that ten minute message—and it was approximately sixteen hours. That did not include the preparation in English. I tried to have everything written

out in Japanese—using the *kanji* (Chinese characters), too. That not only helped my pronunciation but also helped me to learn more *kanji*.

At our Annual Conference in January of 1956, those of us who came in 1954 were assigned to our places of work. I was assigned to Numazu to work with Hal and Dalene Eimon as the Aamodts were leaving for furlough. Evie would live with me and she was assigned to work in Fuji with the Aaslands who would replace Olsons. Our initial period of language study was not over until the end of March so we continued studying. Since we didn't move until July, I started going to Numazu for Saturdays and Sundays from April. My first "job" there was to give the message at the evening service on Easter Sunday. I started an English and Bible Class for High School students on Saturday afternoons, had Sunday School Teachers' meeting in the evening, then directed the Sunday School on Sundays and helped with the worship services—morning and evening. Toshiko Yamamoto, who had just graduated from Bible School was assigned to the Numazu church as the "national worker," and Oiwa-san, a Seminary student also came on week-ends to help.

I packed up again and moved to Numazu on July 10, 1956. Since the decision with regard to where Evie should live was not finalized until later that summer, I was alone for the first little while. However, I soon left for Lake Nojiri as we were to have three weeks of language study there, then three weeks of vacation. Bessie and I rented Aamodt's cabin that summer, and were later joined by two single ladies of the Lutheran Brethren mission. We had another enjoyable summer at the lake. Bessie and I spent a couple of days at a conference in Karuizawa, then went on to Tokyo where I spent a day with Mrs. Douglas, a neighbor from home who was on her way back from visiting her son and family in the Philippines. She was the first person from home that I had seen in the two years that I had been in Japan and I enjoyed getting caught up on home news.

I spent the next few days in Numazu helping with Vacation Bible School before returning to the lake to finish my vacation. When I got home the end of August, Evie had already moved in and we started settling down for our first term of mission work—for the next four years. We had now been in Japan for two years. In a letter to my family I wrote: "I think I can say that these two years have been the most blessed, but also the most difficult of my life. God's word has surely become more precious as He has taught me so many lessons—lessons I probably wouldn't have learned had I stayed at home."

## 24. *Life in Numazu*

**N**umazu is a city situated by the ocean about 120 kilometers (75 miles) south-west of Tokyo. The population in 1956 was 140,000. It was noted for its mild winter climate and picturesque scenery. We often enjoyed bike trips to areas close by, such as to Senbon-Hama (Thousand Pine-tree Beach). And we enjoyed many morning hikes up Kanukiyama—a mountain near our house. On clear days, we had a view of Mount Fuji from our front door. In those days, few missionaries had cars, so our main mode of local transportation was bicycle. For further travel, buses and trains were frequent and convenient. It didn't take us long to learn to love this city and the area surrounding it as we settled into our new home at 377 Sumiyoshi Cho in the area called Kamikanuki. Since Evie worked in the city of Fuji she commuted back and forth to her classes and responsibilities there.

Connie and VaVi Aamodt had started the work in Numazu in 1952, and the church had been built in 1954. Before I knew that I would be assigned to work in this church, I had attended both the ground breaking ceremony, and the dedication of the church building when I had visited during language study. Hal and Dalene Eimon had come to Japan with Evie and me, and like us, were just out of language school. During the four years that the Aamodts and Andy Arneson had worked there, eighteen people had been baptized and the congregation started. When we took over the work, the number had decreased to six—some of the members had moved away, some were in hospitals with TB, and some had left the church. We were to learn that this was a common problem in building the church in Japan. It came to be referred to as “the problem of the back door.” People would come into the church, but for various reasons leave after a few years. The number who remained as faithful, committed members was disappointingly few.

However we were full of enthusiasm as we ventured into this important chapter of our lives—beginning our mission work. I continued with the classes that I had started in the spring when I commuted from Shizuoka, and as time went on, I added more classes. I had an English Bible class in a Girls' High School, invited by a Christian teacher there. Later, I was asked to teach English at a regular class in the school, and this teacher even encouraged me to use Bible stories. I was in



*Numazu Evangelical Lutheran Church*



*Grace and Evie Tuff in front of their house in Numazu, 1956-60*

charge of training and supervising the Sunday School teachers who helped in planning the SS program. Toshiko Yamamoto, the national worker, was a wonderful helper, especially in those early days when my language ability was so limited. (She had been baptized by Lars and had helped him in his work before she studied at the Bible School). I had also added a class for mothers of Sunday School children, and later included any women from the neighborhood who wanted to come. I did regular hospital visitation as one of our members was a patient in the TB ward. With Yamamoto-san, we started a Bible study which included other patients in the same room. We also started visiting Lutheran Hour contacts, and these visits often took us into the mountain areas which we reached by train and bus. The first Christian wedding in our church took place that first fall, when the young

man who had been my tutor at the Bible School married a member of our church. She had also graduated from Bible School and had been working as a national helper in another church. Shigeru and Seiko Nakata remained close friends for many years.

How I enjoyed our first Christmas in Numazu! The Christians had helped in the planning of the Sunday School programs and other activities. I was impressed with their strong desire to make it a celebration that emphasized the true meaning of Christmas. There was so much of the commercial Christmas in Japan, and they didn't want to copy that. For many, it was their first Christmas as followers of Jesus, and they wanted His story to be made known. It meant so much to them to be able to worship with other believers, and our fellowship was very close. I wrote to my family that I was completely satisfied and happy to be at this place this Christmas, to worship the Savior with the Christians here:

"The longing for home has been replaced with such deep satisfaction and peace -it's nothing less than a miracle."

I had been experiencing some homesickness that fall, but my life was becoming so filled with the people around me that I felt that I was experiencing the truth of Matthew 19:29: *"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold..."*

Our church was made up of a lot of young people, and the group became very much like a family. The times we spent around the wood-burning heater after a service, just talking and sharing is one of the pleasant memories of that time.

At the seventh annual conference of our mission in January of 1957, Olaf Hansen was elected superintendent again. He had held that position before their furlough during which time John Homerstad served. I was elected secretary which would mean more committee responsibility. In a letter to my family, I commented:

I enjoyed Conference again. This year, it seemed to run more smoothly than it has since we came to Japan. We're still a very young group, learn-

ing as we go along, so we hope it's a sign of maturing when we gradually become able to handle the business more effectively.

We were experiencing that we had a lot to learn in our work of evangelism, too. During the first year, several young people—some only middle school or high school students—had expressed their desire to become Christians. Some had made decisions at the Bible camp that our mission operated in a mountain area not far from Shizuoka. Some had indicated such a desire after a Bible Study, or at one of our special evangelistic meetings. Some of these continued on and had the catechetical instruction and were baptized. But perhaps just as many “fell by the wayside” as opposition from their families became apparent, or they themselves lost their initial enthusiasm and drifted away. We were gradually learning the importance of understanding their situations in their families and culture, and instructing them accordingly. In my Christmas 1957 form letter I wrote of this concern:

It's comparatively easy to teach Bible truths as I myself understand them, but to put these truths into their settings and situations of life is very difficult—especially for us foreigners. We know that the Spirit will work through His word, but if the people are going to listen well, they need to hear the message in such a way that it reaches them just where they are.

We were privileged to see some fruit of the labor of our first few months in Numazu as four young people were baptized at Christmas time and in January.

The house that Evie and I shared had been built and owned by Japanese, but was mostly western style. It had two *tatami* rooms—one was my bedroom, and the other was for the maid. It was a very cozy house, and we were pleased that our mission had been able to purchase it some years before. It had a very nice *ofuro* which we really enjoyed—especially during the winter when the temperature sometimes dropped to the freezing point. Again because of our busy schedules, and the time it took to do ordinary shopping and take care of household duties, we hired a maid as we had done during language study. The first girl we hired was very satisfactory—one of our church members who had just recently been baptized. But because she knew some English, she was offered a job with higher pay in an English shipping company home, and her parents insisted that she take it. We were able to get another one of our members, Iwazaki-san to replace her, but we did have some problems. She

was sometimes unhappy with us, and talked about it to others. With the help of our national workers, we were able to get the problems straightened out and she stayed with us for a year or so. During the time that she worked for us, she invited us to her home for New Year's—an enjoyable experience. The New Year celebration is such an important family celebration in Japan, and we were happy for the opportunity of being a part of it. Evie and I had both purchased



Grace and Toshiko Yamamoto—out to “dendo” by bicycle—Numazu, 1957-59



*Some members of the Numazu church, with Hal & Dalene Eimon and Grace—1957*

Japanese kimonos and we wore them—just like many of the Japanese women did at this special time of the year.

I was continuing my language study and went to Shizuoka one afternoon a week to study with our language teacher. In June, 1957, I had my last language exam. Not that I was through studying Japanese—I was being tested everyday, so even though I wasn't in the required formal language study, I had to continue working at it. I did continue to travel to Shizuoka once a week for language study during most of my first term. The first few months of my assignment, I prepared Bible studies or messages that I gave by writing it all out in Japanese. That gave me very good practise, but it was so time-consuming that I gradually changed to trying to speak with less notes, and adding some of the Japanese vocabulary in *romaji* to my English notes.

We got our first telephone in February 1957. It was an extension on the line that Eimon's had. Our telephone number was only four digits. At that time, telephones were quite expensive, but the mission was trying to get phones for all the missionaries. We never even considered making international calls—except for real emergencies.

When a new restaurant opened in Numazu—one that specialized in American style meals—the enthusiasm with which we welcomed this latest “improvement” in our lives was an indication of the fact that our tastes had not become completely oriental. Since the food was reasonably priced, we ate out quite often—especially during the times that we didn't have a maid. Iwazaki-san had quit in the fall of 1957. We had part time help for awhile, then a girl who had worked for the Aaslands in Tokyo, worked for a few months. By the spring of 1958, I had had eleven different maids, including our time in language school. I was tiring of training the girls to do our house-work the way we wanted it done—and that often took awhile. Megumi Sato came to work for us in April 1958 and stayed with us until we left for furlough in 1960. She also became a very close friend. She was baptized and became a good worker in our church until she left for Bible School after finishing her job with us.

Before I went to Lake Nojiri for vacation that summer, I climbed Mt. Fuji, the 12,365 feet high mountain that is a symbol of Japan. I climbed with one of the Swedish missionary ladies, and if it hadn't been for her persistence in egging me on, I'm not sure



that I would have made it. It was a lot more difficult than I had anticipated, and I hadn't done anything to prepare for it. But the experience was worth it, even though when we got to the top early enough to see the sunrise, it was cloudy and rainy so we missed that spectacular view. On the way down, the weather cleared and we were able to take pictures to show that we had been "way up there."

We had gotten to know some of the Swedish missionaries who worked in Numazu and an adjacent city. The school for Swedish missionary children was in Numazu. There were only six to eight children in the school, and they lived there under the care of a house-mother and one teacher. We became good friends of these two ladies, and enjoyed many happy occasions together. We were invited to special events at their school so learned something about the Swedish customs, too. Every year on December 13th, *Santa Lucia* and her entourage would visit us in the morning, bringing us the special cookies and coffee, and sing Advent hymns. They brought the children to our church every Sunday for worship as they did understand some Japanese. We and the Eimons also met with them and other Swedish missionaries for monthly fellowships.

Knowing how important it was for the Christians to feel a part of a larger church, the mission started organizing a Believers' Conference which met in the spring of the year. At the conference in 1957 in Shizuoka, the first ordination service since our mission had started was held. One of the men who was ordained, Satoru Kishii, was the first convert in our particular mission, and he had come to know Christ through the ministry of Olaf Hansen. The other man, Pastor Ikeda came to work for some of our missionaries from another church.

Our mission dispensed with a business conference the summer of 1957 and instead had a Spiritual Retreat. Dr. Rogness from our Seminary in St. Paul was the main speaker, and a Norwegian missionary, Mr. Hoass, led Bible studies. Later in July, I took part in Bible Camp at Umegashima—at the High School camp. Because I was teaching at the Girls' High School, some of the girls from that school were allowed to go to the camp. They could not have gone without a teacher accompanying them. Several of the students who attended the Bible camp came regularly to church and Bible classes afterwards.

By the spring of 1958 we were about half way through our four years in Numazu. The work schedule had settled into a pattern of classes (English and Bible), visitation, Sunday School work, and Sunday services. The Eimons and I were encouraged by the way the young Christians eagerly helped in the work of proclaiming the gospel. They were especially helpful in the Sunday School work. They not only helped with the teaching, but they also visited the homes of the students. In the summer, with Yamamoto-san's guidance, they took over the Vacation Bible School. By the end of that year, four more had been baptized so our numbers were gradually increasing. We were attempting to start work in areas around Numazu, usually through following up on Lutheran Hour contacts. We were able to start a home meeting in Mishima, in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Matsumoto, a couple who had applied for the Bible lessons after hearing the gospel on the Lutheran Hour. At that time, there was a Lutheran Hour office in Shizuoka and they sent names of contacts to the churches in the various areas. The home meetings did not result in starting a new church in Mishima, but the Matsumotos became Christians and were baptized in our Numazu church later. Yamamoto-san and I also started a children's meeting in a neighboring village, followed by a Bible study for a family who were also Lutheran Hour contacts.

Summer activities again included language study at Nojiri after which I enjoyed three weeks of vacation sharing one-half of the single lady missionaries' cabin with Anna Marie Mitchell. Besides making some progress in swimming that summer and playing tennis, I tried one of the new sports competitions offered and won the award for women in archery. On my way back to Numazu after vacation, I stopped in Tokyo and

welcomed another Canadian, Marie Tveit to our mission in Japan. I had known Marie when we were both students at LCBI at Outlook, Saskatchewan. Eric and Miriam Pedersen, and Alice Stolee from Alberta had also come the year before, so with Dan and Marie Vinge, our Canadian portion of the mission had grown to two couples and three single ladies.

On September 26, 1958, Typhoon *Ida* hit the Izu Peninsula and caused a lot of damage in areas along the Kano river, the river which runs through Numazu. A thousand people lost their lives and many more lost their homes. The hardest hit area was a town about one hour away from Numazu. Our church became the center for relief work, helping to distribute clothing and food to the people in need.

## 25. *An Eventful Year*

Nineteen fifty-nine was a big year in Japan. The Crown Prince Akihito married Michiko Shoda, a commoner. No little excitement was caused by this tradition breaking marriage. Everyone was very happy about this great event. Most of our neighbors watched the celebration on TV, and we realized that we were perhaps the only ones in our vicinity who didn't have this modern invention.

For the church in Japan, it was also a big year. It was the "Japan Protestant Centennial," the anniversary of one hundred years of Protestant missionary work in Japan. It was also the tenth anniversary of the work of our own Evangelical Lutheran Church, Japan Mission. There were many special events in conjunction with the observances of these anniversaries. In our Numazu church, we observed a triple anniversary on November 1. Besides the two already mentioned, it was the seventh anniversary of the first service in Numazu. The occasion was made even more special as our speaker for that Sunday was Dr. Rolf Syrdal, our Executive Secretary who had been spending time visiting the Japan field.

As a missionary family, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the mission at a Study Conference and Spiritual Retreat in October—even had a large birthday cake with ten candles on it. As a mission and national church, we observed this special event on November 3rd at a very special meeting in Shizuoka City. At this joyous occasion, the Tokai Lutheran Church came into existence. The pastors and laymen of the church had been working on the constitution of the church for over a year, and it was significant that their constitution was adopted on the day that we observed the 10th anniversary of our mission work. This was exactly ten years since Olaf Hansen had left the USA to come to Japan to start the mission. It was a real joy to partake of the Lord's Supper with that body of believers that day.

With new missionaries arriving every year, our numbers had increased to seventy-five. In October, 1957 the Aasland's fifth child (after two sets of twins) had been born. With this new addition, the number of MK's was now eighty, the oldest being thirteen. This included those who were on furlough. We continued to enjoy close fellowship as a mission family, so it was with deep sadness that we received the news of Selma Ingulsrud's death on May 12, 1959. We had welcomed Lars and Selma back from their furlough at the end of March and we wished them well as Lars was to have some additional language study and also work on audio-visual materials for the Mobile Unit. Selma's was the first death of an adult in our mission.

I was one of the missionaries who had attended Selma's memorial service in Hamamatsu. It was some time after the memorial service when I had asked the Lord the question about who was going to care for the three little children. We all wondered how they were going to adjust to life without their mother who had loved them so much. They would have a maid who would make meals for them and help them get ready for school or kindergarten. Other missionary wives would help during special holidays and

perhaps provide special foods occasionally. Lars was a good father and could tuck them in at night and help them with their prayers, and tell them stories. But all that could not replace the care of a mother, so the question repeated itself: *"Who is going to take care of those little children?"*

I wasn't sure if I had received an answer, and if I had, what did it mean?

I continued with my busy schedule of classes and meetings and visitation—a schedule that had gotten busier as the months went by. I was enjoying my work and life in Numazu. Hal and Dalene Eimon now had two children, Janet and Ted, and they added a new interest in our lives. Yamamoto-san had started Bible School in April, as did two of our other young people. Without her help, I was busier as I also had my duties as Secretary of the Mission which meant meetings every month. I rather enjoyed that job, though, as it gave me a chance to visit the various stations and other missionaries.

Since my furlough year was coming up in 1960, I was beginning to think about what I should do during that year. Since Doris would be due for furlough about the same time as I, we talked about the possibility of traveling together to Europe—and maybe Norway—on our way to Canada. I would first travel to South Africa and meet her there. I also considered going back to school and getting a degree—the teachers' training in the late 1940's had qualified me for a teaching certificate, but not for a degree. The more I worked with so many well-educated Japanese people, the more I felt my own lack. I was trying to determine what would be the best plan. Doris, of course, was urging me to make the trip to South Africa. If the "message" that I thought I had heard that night when I had prayed for Lars' children was really a message from the Lord, maybe none of these other plans would work out. These thoughts kept crowding into my mind. I prayed that if what I had heard—"You"—was only my own imagination, then "Please, Lord, take these thoughts away so that I can get on with my work."

I commented to Evie once that I wished I could see one year into the future. It was difficult not to be able to talk to anyone about my thoughts and sometimes that was almost unbearable. At one such time, I said to Anna Marie: "There's something I'd like to talk to you about, but I can't. But just saying this much helps."

She, of course, was very curious but being a good friend, didn't ask me anymore about it. As the months went by, I sometimes managed to forget those thoughts and continued trying to make plans for furlough.

It wasn't only my own plans that I was concerned about. If that "message" meant marriage to Lars, I couldn't see how that would be possible. I knew that I could never marry anyone for any reason other than love, and I couldn't see how he could ever love anyone but Selma. I would manage to convince myself of that, and then after meeting Lars at a mission gathering or at the lake, the questions would again be filling my thoughts. When I saw him and the children having fun at the lake in the summer time, my impression was that they were managing just fine. They didn't need anyone else.

I helped with Vacation Bible School at Nojiri that summer, and Faith was in my class. She often talked about her "Mommy in Heaven." The evening before Lars and the children were to leave Nojiri to go back to Hamamatsu, he told some of us how much he had left to do in closing up the cabin. I thought to myself: "He really needs some help."

When his Christmas letter came at the end of the year, he wrote about how the children missed their mother, and how much he missed her, too. I was convinced that I was right about him not being able to love anyone else. Then we met again at our annual conference, and the confusion returned. Being secretary, I sat up at the front of the room during our business sessions and one time when I looked up, Lars was looking at me and for a brief moment, our eyes met. For the first time, I began to wonder what was in his thoughts.

## 26. *A Change in Plans*

I had continued with the plans that Doris and I had made, and I made reservations to travel on a Royal Inter-ocean ship (a Dutch line) to go to South Africa. Since Doris would not be able to leave until September, the plan was that I would leave Japan in August. Since the Eimons were leaving for furlough in June, it seemed that this would be a good plan so that we wouldn't all leave at once. The summer of 1959 had been particularly busy as besides the regular schedule, I had visitors from home. Alban and Ann Douglas and their two children were on their way home to Canada from their mission work in the Philippines. After three weeks of language study at Nojiri, I went to Kobe to meet their ship, and they came to Numazu with me for a couple of days. Alban preached at our Sunday morning service with Mr. Nakata interpreting. I went with them to Tokyo and the next day they boarded their ship again in Yokohama. I stayed in Numazu the following week and helped with Vacation Bible School, then went back to Nojiri for three weeks of vacation.

December was always very busy since besides the regular Christmas activities, I was responsible for getting the annual reports of the mission typed and sent out to all the missionaries before the conference in January. It usually meant two to three days at our Mission office in Tokyo, typing and mimeographing—with help from others. During conference, I had to type and mimeograph the minutes each day, and after the conference was over, get the final minutes sent to everyone. I was supposed to have finished my duties as secretary at the January 1960 conference, but since the Constituting convention of the national church was to be in July, the time of annual conference was changed to September, so our terms were extended to that time.

In February, I went to Tokyo to finalize my reservations on the ship for South Africa. When I got to the office, they informed me that the ship for the August sailing had been so badly damaged in the typhoon in September (1959) that it would not be sailing. They had hoped to get another ship to replace it, but had not been successful so the August trip was cancelled. It wasn't possible for me to go on the ship that would sail a month earlier, or a month later. The trip to South Africa was not going to work out. I should have been disappointed, but for some reason, I felt relieved.

Earlier when I had been considering going back to study, I had written to Mildred Joel, the registrar at Augsburg College, to enquire about courses. She had been the dean of girls at LCBI, Outlook, when I had studied there, so she already knew me. I sent all my transcripts and she worked out a program of study that would enable me to finish the requirements for a bachelor's degree in two years. At the time, I was excited about the plan, but went ahead with the travel plans instead. Now when the travel was not to be, I thought again about going back to college. But again for some unexplainable reason, I didn't feel any interest in pursuing that plan. I made reservations to fly back to Canada on June 1, thinking that I'd make the decision about furlough after I got home. At this point, I was weary and thought a good rest was the most appealing plan.

Feeling that a break from the regular schedule would give me a short rest, it didn't take much to convince me to accompany Anna Marie Mitchell on a trip by car. We had decided to go to Nagoya and then on to the Ise Shrine area. This was before the days of expressways, so it was quite a long trip. On the way, we stopped in Hamamatsu and since Toshiko Yamamoto was visiting her sister Masako, who worked for Lars, we stopped in for a visit. They insisted that we stay for supper and we had a very pleasant evening. After supper, Lars and the children were going to look at a TV program in their spare room. JohnE took my hand and asked me if I'd like to come and watch TV with them. I did, and afterwards felt impressed with the happy atmosphere in this family. As we left to continue on our trip, something in me thought: "I'd like to be a part of this happy family."

In February 1960, the Lutheran Literature Society was able to bring the Martin Luther movie to Japan. It couldn't be shown in ordinary theaters, so our mission procured one of the films to show in the various churches. Hal Eimon contacted Lars, who was in charge of this movie, and asked if he could come to Numazu and show it. It was rather short notice but Hal would make arrangements to rent a large hall for the showings. We planned it for Friday and Saturday, May 13-14.

The closer it got to the time that I would leave for Canada, the more earnestly I prayed that the Lord would show me what His will was with regard to Lars. I had not been able to keep him out of my thoughts, but I still had no idea of what the future held for me. I prayed that the Lord would show me, before I left for Canada—one way or the other—what His will was. I had reached the point where I felt I had to know. I couldn't go on with this uncertainty. So it was with a sense of anticipation—and wondering what was going to happen—that I helped Hal with the plans for Lars' coming to show the Martin Luther movie.

Lars and the children had moved back to Hamamatsu in June after Selma's death. Shibata-san who had been such a faithful helper before they went on furlough came back to help with the children. Masako Yamamoto, Toshiko's sister, who had recently been baptized, came to work as housekeeper. She had been working for the Hylands, and they graciously let her go because they knew that Lars needed her help. They were both efficient workers and Lars was very thankful to have them in his home.

After Selma's death, some of the other missionaries had offered to have the children stay with them so that they could go to school. He had also asked his mother if she could come and live with them and help care for the children but she didn't think that she could



*Ruthie's 1960 birthday party with Carrick boys and Bruce & Craig Nelson*

live in Japan. He had even thought that he might eventually take the children home and have his brother and sister-in-law take care of them, and he would move out and live in the villages and thus do his mission work more effectively. (That was a plan that was doomed from the start as he could never have separated from his children—nor they from him.)

After getting settled again, and spending time at Lake Nojiri, they settled in to regular



*JohnE and Ruth on their way to school at Nelson's and Carrick's with Faith waiting to go by bus to kindergarten. 1960*

schedules. Lars spent as much time as he could with the children in spite of a full schedule of classes and meetings in the villages. He appreciated the good help of his co-worker, Nakashima Sensei. Jean Carrick of the Presbyterian mission was teaching her children at home, so kindly consented to teaching Ruthie, (fourth grade) too. JohnE started first grade and since Irene Nelson was teaching Bruce, who was the same age and grade as JohnE, it worked very well for him to study at Nelson's. Faith went to the Japanese kindergarten that Ruthie and JohnE had attended. Though everything seemed to be going smoothly, there were times when they all felt very lonely. After an outing one day, they were about to go home when one of the children said, "Let's not go home yet. It's so lonesome there without Mommy." Even though Lars was tired enough to go straight home and relax, they found something else to do for another hour or more.

His Christmas 1959 letter to relatives and friends described their situation:

This Christmas will be different for us as a family, but it is the same Christmas, the same wonderful gospel of God's infinite compassion in sending Jesus to be with us and to save us from sin and give us the hope of eternal life. What a privilege it is to be back



*JohnE studying at the Nelson Home-school, 1960 - Irene Nelson as teacher, and fellow students Bruce and Craig Nelson*

in Japan as a messenger bearing these glad tidings.

It has been a year of stress and of leaning on the Lord: parting with family and friends in America; reunion with friends and coworkers here; language study; and taking up the work again in the Hamana Lagoon district; working in Nagoya in the desolation and debris left by Typhoon 15; and the wound that has left our home crippled, the Lord's taking Selma to her eternal rest. Thanks be to God for His love and provision. He has not left us desolate. We are surrounded by loving friends, Mrs. Carrick who teaches Ruthie every morning, Mrs. Nelson who teaches JohnE first grade, Nakashima Sensei, my co-worker who is out in a village tonight teaching one of my classes, Shibata-san who helped in our home before and still comes to help, Masako-san who left her job and came to help us so that we have a capable Christian housekeeper, the kind Christian teachers at Faith's kindergarten. All the kind friends who have helped here and the host of relatives and friends across the sea who have prayed for us and upheld us. Oh, the mystery of the bond of Christian love! And it all started, actually, back 2000 years ago in a barn in Bethlehem. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed His people."

In his January, 1960 form letter, Lars wrote:

Thank you for your prayers and concern for us. We are getting along. The children miss Selma unconsciously and show it in their actions sometimes, I think. I miss her very consciously. But heaven will certainly be a better place with her there in the prime of life.

Later that year, he wrote about the children's progress in their studies and commented:

I am daily thankful to God for the faith, loyalty, and love of these three precious jewels, and for those who are helping with them—Masako-san, Jean Carrick and Irene Nelson.

Sometime during that following winter, he noticed that he was often thinking about me. It wasn't that we were seeing each other—those times were only at conferences or other mission-connected meetings. It bothered him a great deal, and he couldn't understand why. Towards spring, when he continued to be concerned about his thoughts about me, he started to pray specifically about it. He wasn't sure yet if he was falling in love again, but he prayed that if this was to be the Lord's will, He would have to arrange it. He was really fighting it and determined that he would not take any steps to pursue any relationship—if it was the Lord's leading, He would have to show him by giving him a chance to speak with me alone before I left for furlough. He was also feeling concerned about what the Beils would think if he should re-marry—especially since it seemed so soon after Selma's death. He received a letter from Mrs. Beil one day, and in it she stated:

We hope that you will never hesitate to marry again because of us. We want you to know that we would be happy if you found someone to marry, and to help raise your children.



He became almost angry—probably because he felt that he was losing his fight. He wrote right back to the Beils and told them that he had no intention of getting married again.

When he received the call from Hal to come to Numazu with the Martin Luther movie, he really started to sweat! But he needed the projectors and the film and others had been using the equipment, so he was sure he would not be able to get it back in time. He started making phone calls, and within minutes, was assured that all the equipment was available. He called Hal and told him that he would be there. He still felt that there would probably not be an opportunity to talk to me alone because he knew that I lived with Evie. What he did not know was that Evie had been called home in April because of the death of her father. Megumi-san, our maid, had left to go to Bible School, so I was all alone.





## 27. *"This is the day..."*

**A**s I read my devotions on the morning of Friday, May 13, I prayed that I would know that day—one way or the other—what the Lord's will was with regard to Lars. I was completely at peace to have it go either way. The verse I read was Psalm 118:24:

*This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

I knew then that I was going to know that day—and I was at peace.

In the afternoon, I went with some of the students from my classes to the hall where we were showing the movie. I talked a little with Lars—just ordinary conversation—and as I rode home on my bicycle afterwards, the thought went through my mind: "I've just talked to the man I love." The feeling of peace that I had had since morning was changing to joyful anticipation.

I went back to the hall for another showing of the movie, and at that time, some of the other missionaries were there. It was standard procedure to have the Building Committee check the missionary residences when someone was leaving for furlough, to determine if any repair work would be necessary. Eric Pedersen had been to my house and I had told him that there was something wrong with the transformer that we used to boost the electricity. As we stood around talking after one of the showings, Eric asked Lars if he would go to my house and check that transformer. Lars agreed that he would go after he had finished showing the movie that evening. My thought was, "Oh-oh, here it comes!"

I had dinner at my neighbor's house that evening, but was back home and waited until Lars came. His first question when he opened the door was, "Where's Evie?"

He didn't know until then that she had gone, so now he realized that I was alone—the very situation that he had made the condition in his prayer. I showed him the transformer, and as we had to turn off the electricity while he checked it, I lit a match for him to be able to see. He never let me forget the clumsy way I held the match. I guess I held it up so that it went out almost right away—until he told me how to do it right. Whatever the problem with the transformer was, he was able to fix it very quickly, so I invited him to sit down in the living room. He started to ask me about my plans for furlough. I told him about how my travel plans had fallen through. Then I told him that I had considered staying home for two years and study for a degree, but that I had also lost interest in that. Then he asked me if I had thought about marriage. As I hesitated to answer, he sat with his face in his hands and very nervously told me that some months before he had discovered that he was in love with me. He said that he didn't know what I would think about it but...I didn't take long to answer, but for a brief moment, I think I was actually enjoying seeing this scene because I knew what was happening, and he was still wondering. He could hardly believe it when I told him how the Lord had been

leading me in the last few months. Before we finished talking that evening, we knew that we would be getting married. We knew that the Lord had worked a miracle because we were not only guided to be together, but we loved each other. When I told him that I could not understand how he could love anyone again, he explained that he would always love Selma and cherish her memory, but love needs an object, and since she was no longer here, his love could be directed to someone else. We ended that day with the assurance that this was truly the day that the Lord had made, and we rejoiced and were glad.

Since Lars was staying at the Eimon's that night, they wondered why it took him so long to fix that transformer. They had to wait a few more days to find out. He continued showing the movie the next day, and we sat by the projector and talked while the movie went on. That was our courtship! We had a lot of planning to do. He went back to Hamamatsu that evening, and I was busy with my work for Sunday. Ruth Herbst, who had been assigned to replace me, came that Saturday and spent Sunday getting acquainted with the work that she was to take over later that summer.

On Monday, an Executive Committee meeting had been scheduled in Shizuoka—before the Special Conference that would be held on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday forenoon. I called Olaf Hansen, our Mission Superintendent, and found out what train he'd be on going to Shizuoka, then I joined him on that train. Lars and I had decided that we should tell Olaf of the latest developments. After the usual small talk, I asked Olaf what he would think if I told him that I would not be available for assignment after furlough. Olaf was always on top of any situation, so he quickly answered:

"Oh, I would tell you what I say to everybody—wait until you're on furlough before you make that decision."

"No, I am coming back, I just won't be available for assignment."

I was enjoying having one up on him. He was really puzzled, so I gradually broke the news to him. He almost jumped out of his seat! I told him that I hadn't really said "Yes" yet, to which he replied,

"Oh, you must!"

When we got to Shizuoka, I went to see Anna Marie in her office at the Bible School. I reminded her of the time that I had said there was something that I couldn't talk about—now I could tell her. She, too, was almost speechless with surprise—and so happy for me. We hadn't decided yet when we were going to announce it, so Olaf and Anna Marie agreed not to say anything to others.

At our Executive committee meeting the next morning, Olaf was having a hard time keeping the secret, especially when Alton Knutson told us that he had had a dream that "Grace was getting married." He wasn't sure who I was getting married to, but all the missionaries were at the wedding. Later Marian Hanson told us that she had dreamed that "Lars and Grace were getting married." I had never put much stock in dreams before so this was just a little too much!

After the business was over on Tuesday afternoon, we all gathered at a hotel downtown for a banquet. After that was over and all of the single girls were staying at Anna Marie's house, I sneaked out and went with Lars for a drive. That's when we became engaged—May 17—although we both knew that it had been decided on Friday evening. Maybe it would sound better to say that we became engaged on our second date rather than on our first! At any rate, it probably set a record for the shortest courtship. The next morning, Roselyn Holte questioned me as to where I had disappeared to the night before, so I told her. Lars had stayed at the Johnsrud's, and he let them in on our news. Eleanor Hanson had sensed something was up, so Olaf had not been able to keep it from her. They were the only ones who knew before we announced it at the end of the conference at noon on Wednesday. As usual at the closing of a conference, there were

several announcements to be made. Olaf announced that Lars had an announcement. People were already looking at their train schedules, and were eager to get going. I was still in the secretary's chair at the front of the room, and Lars came forward and made a very brief statement: "A few months ago I discovered that I was in love with Grace, and last night she said, 'Yes', so we plan to get married next January."

The whole conference just about fell apart. Everyone was astounded. Some wondered if they had heard it correctly. Some sat with their mouths open, trying to comprehend what Lars had said. Then they started to come forward with their congratulations and best wishes. They all wanted to know when it all started—and that was a question we didn't answer at that time.

I went to Hamamatsu with Lars that afternoon so that we could tell the children. They were a bit shy, and the news came so suddenly that they didn't show much reaction right away. When Lars told Shibata-san, she didn't seem to be very happy about it. She had loved Selma so much and it seemed hard for her to think of anyone taking her place. I understood that, and respected her feelings. Lars realized, too, that he should have talked to her about it beforehand, showing respect for her age by asking her advice rather than just suddenly introducing me to her.

When I got back to Numazu, Dalene Eimon came right over—she had not been at the conference, so I had not had a chance to talk to her. I told her more of our story than I had told to others, and assured her that I had not been keeping a secret from her. The part of our story that I did not share with very many for a long time was the very beginning of the story. I felt that most people would have difficulty understanding or believing that I had heard that voice say "*You*." Many would think it was a bit weird, and most likely it was something that I had imagined—as I had wondered for so many months. I had never experienced anything like it before, nor have I since, but I'm convinced that it was the Lord calling me. As Lars and I thought about why we had been led in the way that we were, we decided that it could hardly have been done any other way. We were not in a position where we could have dated. It was rather soon after Selma had died, and people certainly would have wondered—and talked. Our work would have been affected, and the children, too. We had a "go-between"—like the Japanese do when planning marriage. Our "go-between" was the Lord, and He arranged everything to work out just right with His timing.

When the Japanese people heard our news, there were various reactions. Our maid, Megumi-san and another young woman from our church who were studying at the Bible School were not happy at first. I guess they had their ideal of a single missionary—one who would give her whole life to mission work. So I had let them down—and it took awhile for them to adjust and realize that maybe I could continue doing mission work even after I was married. After a week or so, they relented and told me that they were happy for me.

So many others responded with, "*erai desu ne!*" (how impressive). They thought I was being very noble—taking on this family with three children, not understanding that they were not my reason (but an added blessing) for marrying Lars. I was growing tired of hearing that comment, so it was a relief to hear Oliver Bergh tell me, "Well, Grace, you're getting a real man!"

More than twenty years later, my good friend, Seiko Nakata confided to us that when we were married, at first they were very concerned because they thought it was a *dojo kekkon*—a marriage out of sympathy. After observing our married life over the years, they had concluded that it was more than that. One of the men in our congregation made an interesting comment when he heard of my plans. He told me that he was glad that I was getting married because now I probably wouldn't have such easy answers for every problem. He was a man who did not have an easy life—he was a poultry farmer, and had

become a Christian, the only one in his family, but it was a daily struggle for him. At church, whenever we talked about difficulties in living the Christian life, apparently he thought that my answers came too readily. I would have scriptural answers to the problems, but not the experience to feel with those who struggled. He felt that in married life, I would learn more about life's problems than I had as a person living alone. His bluntness really made me think, and I've appreciated that he was bold enough to express his opinion—which was right on track.

The two weeks after we had announced our engagement were very busy as I prepared to leave. There were farewells at church and other places, and people dropping in to say good-bye. I went to Hamamatsu to help celebrate JohnE's seventh birthday, and Lars and I went to Tokyo and got my engagement ring, and tend to other business. Right after our announcement, I had written to my family at home and they were as surprised as all of our friends in Japan. Dad and Mom, especially, were happy as they had been concerned about their single daughters so far away, and now I would have my own family.



*Grace leaving on furlough for Canada after becoming engaged to Lars three weeks earlier.  
June 2, 1960*

## 28. *Furlough Months in Canada*

I was scheduled to leave for Vancouver on June 1, but because of earthquakes in Chile, the Canadian Pacific Airlines flights were delayed, so I didn't leave until the next day. A lot of friends were at Haneda to see me off, including Lars, and it was an exciting day. Ruby and Ray and Rose Aline and other relatives and friends welcomed me at the airport in Vancouver.

During the ten days that I spent in the Vancouver area, I was kept busy visiting relatives, shopping and speaking in churches. I had nine speaking engagements in the ten days that I was there. Shopping turned out to be rather stressful. I found that I wasn't sure how I was to answer the clerks when they spoke to me—it was so different from the stores in Japan. I was experiencing reverse culture shock.

Ralph and Miriam, Wayne, Brenda and Scott came to British Columbia while I was there, and since Ruby and Ray had decided to make a trip to Swift Current, we were a group of ten who traveled through the Rockies to the prairies. RoseAline and her friend were with us, too. We went to Edmonton on the way and visited Joyce and Lloyd. While there, I was to bring a greeting to the church convention, but shortly after arriving, I had an "emotional break down" of sorts. Doris gave me a tranquilizer and made me take a rest before we went to the evening service. I guess the schedule of speaking at the churches in BC, then the car-trip where I was constantly with others—all of this coming so soon after the emotional high I had been on the last two weeks in Japan was more than I could handle. I was disappointed because I had been looking forward to being with family, and taking part in all these special activities that I had missed during the last six years. We arrived in Swift Current on June 13. Exactly one month after Lars and I had our first "date." No wonder my emotions were overloaded. So much had changed during that month.

There were more changes to face at home. Dad and Mom had moved from the farm and were living in Swift Current. They had lived on the farm until 1954. By that time, only the two youngest girls were at home. They had bought an unfinished house in Swift Current, and spent the first year finishing it. They continued farming for some years, living out at the farm during the spring and fall seasons. The rural electrification project reached their farm area about the time that they moved into Swift Current, so they had not enjoyed the conveniences of electricity or the telephone most of the time that they farmed. Now they were so appreciative of the conveniences in their new home in the city.

Even though the house was different, the feeling of "home" was the same, and I soon adjusted to life in Canada again. I had talked about going out to the farm just to spend some quiet time and relax for a few days. However, when I went out to see our old home, the buildings and the yard were so full of memories, and with no one there, the emptiness was overwhelming. I soon returned to the new home in Swift Current.

I spent most of July doing deputation work. I was at the Simmie Bible Camp, where I had spent many happy times as a teen-ager, then at Camp Luther in B.C for another

week. I was happy for the opportunity to spend a week in the beautiful Peace River district, sharing the story of missions in Japan in various churches in that northern area.

In August, I traveled to North Dakota and visited Bessie and Evie, who were both on furlough also. I had a lot of explaining to do to Evie as she wondered why I had kept this “development” a secret from her while we were house-mates. I went to meet Lars’ family at Edmore. I stayed with his mother in her house in town and Bertha was visiting at the same time. We visited at Arnold’s and Frank’s farms and they all gave me a warm welcome into the family. I valued this opportunity of getting to know Lars’ family—an appreciation that has continued through the years. At Arnold’s one evening, I had my first experience of eating pizza.

Dan and Marie Vinge had not returned to Japan and were serving a church at Larimore, ND, and I had a chance to visit them, too. From there, I took a train to Albert Lea and spent some time with Inez and Elvin, Nancy, Peter and Pam, and also Jim and Helen and Becky. They took me to Kansas City where Ralph and Miriam lived. While there, I tried on a wedding dress that a friend of Miriam’s had worn at her wedding. She wanted me to wear it for my wedding, and since it fit, and was a beautiful dress, I accepted her offer.

On my way back by bus to Iowa from Kansas, I stopped in Des Moines. The Beils had invited me to visit them, and I was there overnight. The Weertzes joined us for dinner that evening. That visit meant so much to me. I was completely overwhelmed with their graciousness—and I felt so loved. Even though their hearts were still aching for Selma, their welcome was so genuine. They were thankful that their dear grand-children in Japan were going to have a mother again.

Before returning to Canada, I spent a few days in St. Paul. Evie was staying at the LDR House—the furlough home for single lady missionaries, and I was glad for the opportunity to spend time in that special place. I would never have that chance again. I modeled my wedding dress for Evie and the other ladies living there.

I traveled back home on the Soo Line which was still running between Minneapolis and Moose Jaw. I found these train trips quite relaxing—mainly because there were so few people on them. Such a contrast to trains in Japan. Lars had asked me to get a projector for him in the United States, and I had problems with that going through customs. Since I had already used up my quota of what I could bring into Canada (when I came from Japan) I had to pay quite a bit of duty on it.

During the fall months, I continued doing deputation work in churches in Saskatchewan. I traveled mainly by car, using my folks’ car. Sometimes they went with me. One of the first of these assignments was at my home church, St. Olaf’s in Swift Current. They put on a lovely reception for me after I spoke and showed my slides. Their “love-offering” that evening was our wedding gift from the congregation.

Besides my speaking schedule, I was busy shopping and getting ready to go back to Japan. Since the mission policy was for missionaries to have a furlough of one year, it was a bit difficult for Mom to adjust to the idea that I would be home for only about half of that time. I had written so much about how I was looking forward to being at home, and now, even though I enjoyed this time with my family, I could hardly wait to get back to Japan. Dad and Mom were happy that I was going to be married but Mom was giving me a hard time about the change in my plans, and tried to get me to stay longer. Finally one day I got a bit impatient with her and said,

“Mom, what would you do if you had a fiancé and three children over there waiting for you?”

Her reply, “I probably wouldn’t have come home in the first place”—convinced me that I needn’t worry anymore about her complaints.



Lars wrote about our marriage plans in a form letter to friends at home and added:

Though she is thousands of miles away, yet she has become a part of our lives. Ruth talks of how nice our home will be, Faith talks of little brothers and sisters, and John teases a little.

We set our wedding date for January 23, and Doris adjusted her travel plans so that she could come home by way of Japan and be at the wedding. The last couple of months were busy as I shopped and made preparations for our big day. Mom and I baked the wedding cake, which according to Canadian custom was a fruit cake. When I had taught school at Beaver Flat, my landlady, Bertha Olson was an expert at decorating and she decorated the cake—with a frosting supposedly hard enough to withstand being shipped to Japan. (The large lower layer didn't quite make it, and I had to have it redone in Shizuoka.) There were showers and parties, and packing, but it all got taken care of and I was able to celebrate Christmas with the family at home.



## 29. *Wedding in Japan*

I boarded the train the day after Christmas and went to Vancouver where I boarded a Canadian Pacific Airlines flight to Japan. I had spent a night at Ruby and Ray's because my plane that was supposed to have taken off on the evening of the 28th was delayed 17 hours due to fog and mechanical trouble. After that delay, we were to leave shortly after noon on the 29th. That morning as I was all packed and ready and eager to go, I decided to clean my engagement ring. I used a small brush to make sure that the diamond and its setting would really sparkle when I saw my beloved again. About an hour before Ruby was going to take me to the airport, I happened to glance at my ring finger. What a shock! The diamond was gone! During the next frantic moments, Ruby and I were down on our hands and knees looking for that precious stone. Trying to find a diamond with eyes full of tears is not easy! Then I remembered cleaning the ring, and we decided that maybe it had gone down the sink drain. Ruby didn't know how to get the pipes off, so she called Ray at work. He drove home as fast as he could go in the fog, got his tools, took the pipe off under the sink. He didn't find the diamond, and I was about ready to resign myself to the fact that it was lost. Then he poured the water that was in the curved part of the drain into a pan. As he slowly poured that water out, there it was. The diamond was in the pan. I quickly taped it inside an envelope, and we rushed to the airport. After all our rushing and panic, we were told that the flight was delayed again and we had a four hour wait.

Thankfully, as there were very few passengers on the flight, I had a whole row of seats to myself and was able to stretch out and sleep for much of the trip. I arrived in Tokyo at one-fifteen a.m. on December 31 and was pleasantly surprised to see that the children had come with Lars and the Swendseids to meet me. I thought that at such an hour they would have been sleeping. We did get a little sleep at Swendseid's house before boarding the train at eight-thirty the next morning to go back to Hamamatsu. I stayed at Nelson's until Monday when I went to Shizuoka and stayed with Anna Marie until my wedding day.

The next weeks were busy as Lars kept on with his regular meetings, and I was busy with preparations. On New Year's day, the Christians from the villages where Lars worked came to the house for the New Year's worship and celebration. This was my first meeting with the people in Lars' churches. We made a couple of trips to Tokyo to take care of the legal aspects of our marriage—at the American Embassy and the Japanese Ward office. We were able to get all of that taken care of on January 16, which is our legal marriage date. That day was a full day of celebration. I had spent the early part of the day at Ruth Herbst's apartment where the single girls had a shower for me. After we had completed the legal part of our marriage at the Ward Office in Yokohama, we went to a restaurant and had a simple lunch to celebrate. Lars also bought a corsage for me. We took the ring back to the place where we had purchased it, and they found that the setting had been faulty. They redid it for us, and after thirty-seven years, it's still there.



*Olaf Hansen, Ruthie, Anna Marie Mitchell, Doris Nelson, Faith, Grace, Lars, JohnE, Nakashima Sensei, Doug Swendseid and Leroy Johnsrud at Otowa Cho church.*

We met Doris in Tokyo on January 2, and in spite of our busy schedules, we had time to show her a little of Japan and introduce her to a lot of our friends. She and I spent one week-end in Numazu. She spoke at the evening service in our church and showed her slides of South Africa, and later did the same at the Bible School.

The missionary wives in the Shizuoka area did all the work in preparing for the reception for our wedding. They made the fancy sandwiches, and baked cookies. Doris reminded me of my good fortune in having so many friends doing my thinking for me, hence all the planning for the wedding and reception went smoothly. A dressmaker in Hamamatsu made the dresses for the bridesmaids—Doris as maid of honor, Anna Marie as bridesmaid, Ruthie as junior bridesmaid, and Faith as flower girl. I had bought the trousers and jacket for JohnE in Canada, and a tailor in one of Lars' churches altered them, so JohnE looked sharp as ring bearer.

January 23, 1961 was a beautiful sunny day—even warmer than usual for Shizuoka. The children had come to Anna Marie's house the day before to make it easier to get them in their wedding clothes and all ready for the wedding service which was at 2 p.m. The service was at the Otowa Cho Church. Leroy Johnsrud presided, and Olaf Hansen gave



the sermon which was interpreted by Satoru Kishii. Mavis (Solveig) Swendseid was the organist, and Russ Sanoden the soloist. Lars' attendants were Nakashima Sensei and Doug Swendseid. The church was filled with Japanese and missionary friends, approximately 175 guests. Since it was a work day, several Japanese who wanted to be there were unable to get time off. Before I walked up the aisle, Ruth, JohnE and Faith sang *Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us* in both English and Japanese. Since the service was

interpreted, it got to be quite long. I didn't mind because I thought everything was so beautiful and I was completely happy. Faith was the one who suffered most from the long service. As flower girl, she carried a basket of flowers. In the basket was a rather heavy frog to hold the flowers in place. No one had thought to tell her that she could set the basket down. She held it through the whole service. The reception was held right at the church. Bo Sorenson, who was then the mission superintendent, presided at the reception. As was typical at weddings in Japan, there was a program—speeches, telegrams read from Japan, the United States, and Canada, and special music. We were pleased to note that “our verse”—*This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it*—was used in a cablegram from my home church, and Bernice Boyum quoted it as she gave a greeting on behalf of the single lady missionaries. Masako-san served as hostess at the reception.



Our honeymoon was at the new modern Silk Hotel in Yokohama. Because of a train accident that day, we didn't get to Yokohama until near midnight. We spent a restful week after the busyness of the previous month. We had thought that we'd go up to the mountains for skating but instead made a couple of short trips to near-by skating rinks. We kept in touch with the children by telephone. Their trip home from the wedding with Masako-san had been rather hectic, too, due to the train delays. Perhaps it was from being overtired, or maybe it was from all the changes in their lives, and also a feeling of lonesomeness—at any rate, JohnE had been rather upset all the way home. We were thankful again for the loving care that Masako-san was giving the children.

# Part V

*Lars & Grace's Life Together*





## 30. *Life at 222 Kamiikegawa Cho*

The children were very excited when we arrived home the following week. The morning after we came home, Faith asked, "Can we make the house pretty now?"

I spent the next few weeks unpacking and sorting and doing some rearranging. I was very thankful for Masako-san's good help so that I didn't have to take full charge of everything right away. I was amazed at her graciousness and true servant attitude. The afternoon that we returned from our honeymoon,



*Our Hamamatsu home at Kamiikegawa Cho, 1961*

she asked me what she should prepare for supper. I asked her to please continue as she had been doing and to make what she had planned. I was not ready to be the full time housewife and mother quite yet. She was a real blessing to me during this time of adjustment, and continued on to become a part of our family for years to come.

Though Ruth and Faith were excited about "making the house pretty" and any changes that entailed, JohnE was not as eager. I sensed that I needed to move a bit slower with regards to any changes that affected him. We rearranged their rooms so that Ruthie now had a room by herself—what had been the guest room. At first, Faith called me "Mommy" but they decided that I should be "Mother;" "Mommy" was in Heaven—and that's the way it has continued.

We had promised the children that we would take another honeymoon trip with them along. We couldn't be gone for many days at a time, so instead of one long trip, we took two short trips. The first one was to a ski lodge about an hour out of Nagoya. We stayed overnight in the lodge and enjoyed the skiing. Later, we went to Hakone to skate, and on our way there, we stayed overnight at the Gilbertsons in Numazu. Besides sharing these honeymoon trips, the children also enjoyed helping to open "our" wedding gifts. Packages from friends and relatives at home kept arriving for some time after the wedding, and we made it a point to open our gifts as a family.

Early in March, the five church groups that Lars served had a joint meeting in one of the villages. Following the worship service, they had a special reception to welcome me, and to celebrate our marriage. Many of them had not been able to come to our wedding, so it was almost like a second wedding reception. Ordinarily, the children and I did not go with Lars on Sundays because he went to at least three different places and it would

have been too tiring for all. He was usually gone all day. We worshipped at the Hamamatsu Church where Dick Nelson was serving.

We had decided, too, that my furlough was not over until summer, so I should not go back to work until then. However in May, we started a meeting for the Christian ladies from the churches and I met with them once a month. I also filled in for Lars one Sunday when he was sick. I enjoyed the times when we did accompany Lars and gradually I was able to get to know more of the Christians from his churches.

The old man, Kawai-san, who had been Lars' interpreter during the first couple of years of his work in that area, lived in a little house next to our garage. He had become very feeble and needed more care, so he was moved to a home for the aged. The small house that had been his home became our laundry room. We had moved the washing machine out in order to make room for the freezer that our folks had given us for a wedding gift. I was soon busy freezing fruits and vegetables as they were in season, and also did more and more baking to have on hand for the numerous guests who came.

The adjustment to being a wife and mother at age thirty-three after many years of living and working quite independently did not come without some difficulties. I had a loving husband and I thought that marriage was wonderful. But it was only natural that two people who had lived their own lives in their own ways for so long would have some adjusting to do. Lars and I discovered that our backgrounds were very similar. We had grown up only five hundred miles apart—he on a farm in North Dakota, and I on a farm in Saskatchewan. We were often surprised at the similarities in our early experiences. Those similarities surely helped in our adjustment, and the differences we had never threatened our relationship—our mutual love was strong, and the conviction that the Lord had brought us together helped us to work through any problems.

I couldn't have asked for easier children to raise. I wrote in a letter to my family two or three months after our marriage: "I've never seen three children play better together. They are so good at entertaining themselves and enjoy each other so much."

I had thought that the older a child is the more difficult the adjustment to a new parent. Therefore, I expected that it would take Ruthie longer to accept me, and that Faith would quickly adjust. It seemed that the opposite was true. Ruthie didn't seem to mind losing her position as "mother" to her two younger siblings, and she seemed ready to have someone else "mother" her. Faith was different—she was so close to her Daddy, so if he was around, she didn't really need anyone else. However, she was very happy to have Mother go with her to the Mothers' meeting at her kindergarten. She had always felt "different" when Shibata-san took the place of her mother at these meetings. JohnE had missed his mother very much and I think the fact that he sucked his thumb until he was about eight years old was indicative of his sense of loss. But he, too, seemed ready to have a mother again. When I think back on those first few years of motherhood, I think my greatest failure was in my attitude. I was so concerned with doing what was "right" as a mother and as a result, the tenderness was sometimes missing. Maybe there was still too much of the "school teacher" in me.

There were times in those first few months that I missed having time alone. Even though I had had a house-mate and a maid when I lived in Numazu, I did have times when I could be entirely by myself. That was difficult now with a husband and three children. In April of that first year, Lars had gone to Tokyo for a conference on Rural Evangelism and was gone for two nights. This was to be the first time that I would have a chance for the solitude that I had been missing. But that was not to be. The children informed me "We always used to sleep with Mommy when Daddy was away"—so they did *jan-ken-poi* to see who was to have that privilege, and Ruthie won. Those times were important as opportunities for bonding with the children and I was glad for that, so I had to find my solitude in other ways.

Our life was very busy. Masako-san had thought that she would leave after I had gotten settled, but there was so much to do all the time, and we had so many guests. She had a couple of days vacation in the spring, and I realized when I tried to do everything by myself that it would be very difficult—if I were to be fit to live with. There were times when we had guests every day for a period of a couple of weeks—missionaries, and Japanese, and sometimes guests from overseas. When we had special meetings in the villages, the speakers stayed at our house. The Carricks left for furlough in June, and we invited them for their main meal for four days before they left—that meant six extra each time. We also planted a garden. The lot just south of our house was empty, and the owner permitted us to use it for a garden. We planted various vegetables, and not only had fun working at it, but also enjoyed the fruits of our labor. We had a lot of beans, peas, and corn to put in the freezer for winter. Lars was busier than usual in his work, too, because Nakashima Sensei was hospitalized for some months after they discovered he had tuberculosis.

In June, Lars and the Christians in his churches had arranged for *dendoshukai*—special evangelism meetings. They had one series in Mikkabi, and later another series in Washizu, held in a tent. The children and I usually went along to these meetings. I played the organ, and the children helped pass out announcements. One evening, before the meeting started, we told them that they could go out and invite people to come in. They did, but soon Ruthie came running in and reported that Faith was telling people that if they didn't come, they would go to Hell. Later, at home, we were laughing about this incident, and Faith, very seriously told us, "But that's really not funny." We agreed that it wasn't, and commended her for her courage.

Faith was six when we were married, and kept us amused with her cute remarks and questions. She complained when she had to wear dresses, and didn't like to have her hair curled. "People always say I'm so cute, but when I look in the mirror, I don't think so."

She kept her sister humble by similar remarks: "Japanese always say that Ruthie is pretty, but I don't think so. She has too many spots (freckles) on her face."

As in most families, we had our share of pets. When the Unseths left for furlough, they sold a collie that they had gotten from some service people. The children named him Tory and had a lot of good times with him, so were very sad when he died a couple of years later. Faith found a stray puppy near our house one day, and though she didn't directly ask if she could keep it, she described to us how sad and lonesome it looked. We decided she could keep it if it was a "he." She named him Fido, and a year later "he" had five puppies.

Faith always had many theological questions, and after going to bed would sometimes keep us going for a half hour or more trying to answer her questions. I sometimes missed not being able to lead Bible studies as I had when I was a full-time missionary. One night when I had read a Bible story to the children and had many questions to answer after the story, I realized that this was my Bible class—and it was just as important as any other class, or maybe more so. My calling had not changed—it was just that my class members were different.

Our summer vacation at Lake Nojiri was different for me being in our own cabin, instead of renting as I had always done before. It was different being on the other side of the lake, farther away from most of the rest of our missionaries, but we visited back and forth a lot anyway. It was special being just by ourselves as a family for the first time since we were married. I had part time maid service, mainly to do the laundry as we didn't have a washing machine and had to do the washing by hand. Lars had gotten a different motor boat so he and Doug did a lot of water skiing. The children and I enjoyed the surf board. The annual mission conference was held at a hotel in Nojiri village that summer, so we commuted from our cabin for the three days of the conference sessions.



*Ruthie and other Hostel friends waiting for a train to go home for a week-end. Mom Elf seeing them off.*

As soon as we got home from the lake, I was busy getting Ruthie ready to go the Children's Hostel in Tokyo. She was entering sixth grade at the American School in Japan and was to live at the hostel with eleven other children from our mission. It was not easy to have her leave home and go to the hostel—especially for JohnE and Faith. The day before Ruthie was to leave, Faith went to her room at 5:15 in the morning and in a very sad tone of voice said, "Ruthie, this is the last whole day you'll be home."

Ruth was quite excited about going, especially because three of her close friends, Cathy Vorland, Trudy Homerstad and Karen Luttio would be there. I went with her on September 12 and helped her get settled in her room with Karen. We parents were all very appreciative of the good care given to our children at the hostel by Paul and Donna Vang and Mom Elf (Mrs. Ellefson). Ruthie's first visit home was the week-end of the 22nd, and after that it was about every three weeks. We all looked forward to those week-ends.

JohnE had gone with me when I took Ruthie to the hostel because he needed to go to an eye specialist. We suspected that he needed glasses because his eyes tired so easily and he didn't enjoy reading. He has worn glasses ever since. The day after Ruthie left, we started school at home. Ruthie's room became the school room and JohnE started third grade and Faith first. We used the Calvert Correspondence course the first year, but in subsequent years I got the text books from the American School and followed their curriculum as closely as I could. It had been about nine years since I had taught school in Saskatchewan, and I rather enjoyed getting back into it. Since JohnE and Faith spoke Japanese better than they spoke English, we decided to discontinue the Japanese lessons and concentrate on English. As an example of how Japanese had affected her English, Faith told us one day that she had six loose teeth "four on the up and two on the down." We were able to find a Japanese teacher for us, so I became a student also and started studying two or three afternoons a week.

We were finding that as the years went by, we became more and more involved in the lives of the people. There were weddings to attend, and sometimes we participated in them. We were much involved in a wedding in early January, 1962. Toshiko Yamamoto, who had been baptized by Lars in the early part of his ministry, and with whom I had worked in Numazu, married a Canadian-Japanese. Isao Yamamoto had come from Edmonton, Alberta, and met Toshiko after having corresponded with her for some months. They had been introduced by Marie Tveit who had worked with Toshiko in the Nagoya church. Since Toshiko's sister, Masako, worked for us, the wedding preparations were very much centered at our house. Lars performed the ceremony at the Hamamatsu church, and Faith was excited to wear her flower girl dress again as train-bearer. Masako-san and I prepared fancy sandwiches and baked cookies and the fruit cake—Canadian style wedding cake for the reception.

Lars continued to be very busy. Besides his regular work in the villages, he and some of the men from the churches spent a few days in Tokyo tearing down an old building that the mission had given to the Mikkabi church. The following spring, they rebuilt it in

Mikkabi. Being a carpenter and a missionary at the same time made for a very heavy schedule. Besides the regular meetings, there were some members in hospitals or ill at home that Lars visited regularly. One of these was an old man in Mikkabi who had a stroke four years after he had been baptized. Lars visited him after the worship service in Mikkabi every Sunday. The man's wife sat near by and gradually started listening and taking part in the singing. In December, she learned that she had terminal cancer. One Sunday she told Lars that she wanted to be a Christian and asked to be baptized. Lars and Nakashima Sensei had the baptism the following Thursday, and three days later she passed away. Her funeral was the first Christian funeral that Lars had in this rural parish.

Every summer that we were in Hamamatsu, Lars and the Christians had a couple of Bible Camps on the beach. He had gotten a lot of camp equipment from the United States air base when they moved out, so they set up tents and had the camps. It required a lot of work in setting up, and then taking it all down after the camps, but the people who attended enjoyed the time spent studying the Word and worshipping together. The first summer that they had the camps, there was a space of a couple of days between sessions. They couldn't leave all the equipment unguarded, so Lars, Ruthie and JohnE stayed at the camp. Faith felt left out when she couldn't go along, but she made up for it by making her own camp out in the yard. She had great fun fixing up a blanket over a clothes line for a tent, then invited some of her Japanese friends to join her.



Getting ready for our first Christmas as a family was enjoyable as the children were so excited, and I had few outside responsibilities. Since Christmas Day was on Monday that year, the church Christmas worship and celebration was on Sunday, and we were able to have our family Christmas right on Christmas Day. That didn't happen very often in Japan. Besides our family Christmas, and the special Christmas celebration with the churches, we had a Christmas program put on by all the children who were studying at home. Since the Carricks and the Nelsons and we lived fairly close together and the Vorlands lived in Kakegawa, a half hour away, we all got together at our house. A couple of the mothers planned the program and the children practised at home. The resulting



*First Sunday in Advent—November, 1961*

program was something these children will always remember. They memorized more carols and parts of the Christmas story than children in an ordinary school setting would have done. The parents were the audience, and after the program we had a feast of Christmas goodies. That custom continued for the time that we lived in Hamamatsu, and increased to include other missionary families from neighboring cities.

## 31. *Family and Church Increases*

**W**e celebrated our first anniversary in 1962 by taking a trip to Tokyo and Yokohama with the children. We went to the airport to see Isao and Toshiko Yamamoto off to Canada, then brought Ruthie from the hostel and had our anniversary dinner at a hotel and stayed overnight. The children thought it was great. While in Tokyo, I also went to the SDA clinic and had a checkup to make sure that everything was fine with the new member of the family that we were expecting in May. The children were quite excited about the prospects of a little brother—they insisted that that's what it had to be. Later, however, Faith thought it would be nice to have a little sister so that she would have someone to grow into her clothes. The first three months were rather miserable, and that was about the time that we had started our home school. Again, I was very thankful for Masako-san's good help. Faith dubbed the baby "Porky" and that was what he was called until he was born.

We had a rather quiet winter and spring at home, busy with school, piano lessons, and planning for the new baby. Because we aimed to finish school before I went to Tokyo for the birth, we worked extra hard and finished on May 3. Ruth had missed coming home in February because of an ear infection, so she had been away for two months—a long time. She was growing so fast that every time she came home, I had to alter some of her clothes. Faith had been worried about getting things ready for the baby—especially after Barbara Tang had told her what their baby was going to wear when they came home from the hospital. She persisted until we had the bassinet ready and had decided what our baby was to wear when we brought "him" home.

Our mission had a Spiritual Retreat at a hotel in Numazu, May 7-9. Our Director, Dr. Syrdal, was visiting the work in Japan during that month, and was with us at the retreat. There were six or seven of us expectant mothers in attendance during those days, which was somewhat of a record for the mission. I went to Tokyo from the Retreat and stayed at Swendseid's until I entered the Seventh Day Adventist hospital. JohnE and Faith were with me the first three days and enjoyed the time with their good friends, Rachel and Claudia Swendseid. They went to school with them one day to see what a real school was like. They even took part in the piano recital that Mavis Swendseid had for her students, Ruthie being one of them.

Lars had planned to come to Tokyo as soon as I started labor—we thought that since it was my first, he'd easily make it in time. On May 17, after seeing Dr. Nelson at the clinic at Harajuku, I went by taxi to the hospital at Ogikubo. and checked in at 5:30 p.m. The doctor expected that he would check on me later that evening. However, Joel Milo did not wait and he was born at 9:30. Dr. Olson took over until Dr. Nelson arrived. I had called home when I entered the hospital, but Lars was at Mikkabi where he had been busy helping to build the church parsonage. Masako-san gave him the message and he was getting ready to catch a night train when I called and told him that he might as well sleep at home and come in the morning. Joel Milo had a good start, weighing in at nine



*Lars baptizing Joel Milo at home, June, 1962*

pounds five ounces. Lars arrived the next morning, and together we rejoiced in our precious gift. Joel had arrived on the anniversary of our engagement—not to mention that it was also Norwegian Independence Day. Lars spent the day getting Joel duly registered at the American Embassy and also at the Japanese Ward office.

I thoroughly enjoyed being pampered in the hospital for one week. Lars came to accompany us home on the train. Ruth had come to the hospital and had met her new little brother, and JohnE and Faith were very excited when we arrived home. They were a little disappointed at first because all he did was sleep and eat, but it wasn't long before they started to enjoy him just as he was. Ruthie finished school on June 12, and the three of them became good helpers and baby-sitters. Faith commented that her Mommy must have had a hard time when Ruthie was a baby because she didn't have three older children to help, nor a maid. Apparently, I had been giving the baby too much attention when I first came home as Faith

asked me one day, "Which do you think is more fun—having a baby, or having two girls and a boy?" I assured her that having all of them was the best.

Since we didn't have any church buildings in any of the villages yet, we invited the people from the various villages to our house for a joint service on June 17. At that service, Lars baptized Joel. Russ and Alice Sanoden and Marie Tveit were his sponsors.

For the first time, we owned our own car from the fall of 1961. Lars was still using the mobile unit for his work, but there were times when he didn't need all the equipment when he went for classes or meetings, so a smaller car was very convenient. We bought a 1952 Hillman from the Vorlands when they got a newer model. Thus in July 1962, we drove by car to Nojiri for the first time. Some of our friends doubted that the old Hillman would make it through the mountains, but except for a little problem on the first leg of the trip, which Lars was able to fix, we arrived safely. As the roads were not very good, especially as we got close to the lake, we took two days for the trip, staying overnight in Tokyo. Our vacation had started out on a rather distressing note. The night before we were leaving, a thief broke into our house and stole the money that Lars had left on the kitchen table for Masako-san to have for the summer. It was so hot that night, and since there was a little breeze that came in the dining room window, we had left it open a few inches. That was the window through which the thief came in.

We spent seven weeks at the lake that summer because Lars had three and a half weeks of language study and at the end of the summer, our annual conference was again held at Nojiri.

We all tried water-skiing, and Ruthie became quite proficient at it. For the *Water Show*, she and Lars showed off some of their tricks. They skied side by side for awhile, then gradually Ruth dropped one ski and Lars got her up on his shoulders as she dropped the second ski. They also showed how the whole family, excluding Joel and his mother, enjoyed the surf board. I did manage to learn to ski during that month—under protest—I thought a mother with a three month old baby shouldn't be trying such tricks. But Lars insisted, and we all survived and enjoyed skiing for many summers. JohnE tried that



year, but it wasn't until the next summer that his legs were strong enough so that he could get up on skis.

The rest of the year we were all busy with our various responsibilities. Lars was elected to the Executive Committee at the conference, which meant more committee meetings for him. Though he was no longer on the Building Committee, he still served as an advisory member to continue the planning for the new hostel and other buildings since he had been in on the preliminary work. We now had a Seminary graduate serving his internship at the church in Mikkabi and that took a lot of the load off Lars' schedule. Nakayama-san and his wife lived in the parsonage-meeting hall that Lars and other members had built. With the new meeting place, attendance at the services and classes was three to four times what it had been. There were about 120 people at the Christmas service and program, the biggest "Christmas" since Lars had started the work in that area. We were thankful, not only for the numbers but for the spirit in which they all participated. There seemed to be a sincere seeking on the part of many to find the true meaning of Christmas.

There had not been a set meeting place in Washizu, another one of the villages where Lars was having regular meetings. The father of two of the members of the church in Washizu had offered to sell the mission a small hotel that was no longer being used. He had a rather high position in the town and though he was not a Christian he was concerned for the young people in the area. He wanted the church to have a good meeting place in order to reach the youth. Because of his position in the city, he was able to offer this property at a very low price. Lars thought that it would have been ideal, as it would have made a good meeting place and it was large enough so that we could have had our living quarters upstairs. He asked the mission to consider purchasing this building, but for various reasons, the conference turned it down. Lars was very disappointed, and the man who had made the offer was very critical of the church for not accepting his offer. They then had to look for other places to meet.

Lars heard of some Swedish missionaries who had used an old bus for a meeting place until they got enough members and means to build a church. He and the members



*Dr. James Burtness of Luther Seminary speaking at the "bus church" dedication service in Washizu. Kamii Sensei, a Christian English teacher, interpreting.*

looked into it, found a bus that was available, had it set up at a suitable location and fixed it up to be used as a church. About fifty people could be seated in it. The steering wheel was taken out and a pulpit put in its place. We had a small pump organ that fit just right in front of the front seats. The members painted the interior and made curtains for the windows, so it really looked quite comfortable. Dr. Jim Burtness from Luther Seminary in St. Paul was the guest preacher on the Sunday that the "bus-church" was dedicated. We used this bus-church until we left for furlough in 1964. Besides the meetings in Mikkabi and Washizu, we were having regular weekly meetings in three other villages.

In the fall of 1962, Ruth was back at the hostel and in Junior High at ASIJ. The Homerstads were now the house parents as the Vangs were on furlough. After having been quite homesick the first year in the hostel, Ruthie was enjoying living with her three best friends and fifteen other MK's. We all enjoyed her week-ends at home every three weeks, and longer times for holidays. Faith summed up what we all thought when she commented: "The best time is when it's just all our family together."

We were back in our school room at home with Joel often joining us in his walker or play pen. In our Christmas form letter that year, we had each of the children write their own part. About studying at home, JohnE wrote:

I'm in fourth grade. I do not like studying by myself—I want to go to school like Ruthie does, but then I would not come home for 3 or 4 weeks at a time. I like to read history books.

Faith's comments were:

I like to read books, but I don't like school so well because it's not fun. I'm in second grade. I like to learn poems very, very much. We have many good friends around here to play with. We speak Japanese to them. I hope my friends will become Christians.

Before the end of the school year, I got the Stanford Achievement Tests from ASIJ and used them to test JohnE and Faith to see how they were actually doing in their studies. JohnE had a grade equivalent of 5.6, and Faith's grade equivalent was 3.3. It was the first time that Faith had taken a test like that so she spent too much time on difficult questions and didn't finish in time. But we were satisfied that they were not behind other students of the same age. We wondered about having JohnE go to the hostel when he started fifth grade, and gave it a lot of serious thought. We concluded that since we had only one more year before furlough, it would be just as well to continue at home. Then he could make the adjustment to school life while we were in the United States, and he wouldn't have to adjust to school and being away from home at the same time. We realized that it would probably be better for him to be in a regular school, but we felt that the advantages of being at home at that age were greater.

JohnE and Faith continued with their piano lessons, and I was wishing they had access to a good teacher as they needed more than what I could teach them. I didn't want them to study with the teacher they had previously had as he didn't teach them to sight read. JohnE thought that he also wanted to learn to play the violin, so we gave him a violin for his tenth birthday. He was not the athletic type and was more interested in music, and we wanted to encourage him to pursue those interests. Faith wasn't interested in any other instrument at that time because she didn't like to practise.

Joel was a very active little boy and had more than his share of accidents during his first year. He went over the edge in the *genkan* when he was in his walker, and chipped one of his brand new teeth. Another time, when he was in his walker, he grabbed the

open oven door and the spring in the door caused it to slam shut. As he had his hand on the side of the oven, the door slammed on his thumb and took his nail off. He screamed for a half hour after that. That accident kept him from sucking his thumb for awhile. Just before he was a year old, he was half-way up the stairs when he looked up at Faith, and fell backwards. He hit the back of his head and cut a big gash in his tongue. Even though his tongue was so swollen he could hardly get it in his mouth, he didn't miss a meal. After that happened, he wasn't as eager to climb the stairs. He had fallen before when he tried to go up the stairs, and when I asked Lars to make a gate at the foot of the stairs, he insisted that an Ingulsrud will fall and hurt himself just once and then he learns his lesson. There must have been a strain of Nelson persistence or ignorance that was stronger than the Ingulsrud strain because Joel would try climbing five minutes after he had fallen and banged his head.

Joel wasn't the only one who had accidents. Ruthie came home from the hostel in May with her right arm in a sling after hurting it at play. But another accident that could have been much more serious happened to Lars in March 1963. The Student Center from Tokyo was having a Work Camp at Mikkabi, building blocks to make a block fence around the church lot. Lars had gotten a block machine that used almost all sand. On the last day of the camp, when Lars and three others were hauling the last load of sand, there was a cave-in at the sand pit. Lars was caught in it and was almost buried. Only his head and part of one arm were out. It took the other three men about ten minutes to dig him out from under the two to three tons of sand. The pressure was so great that he couldn't feel anything in his legs, and he could hardly talk because he'd lose too much breath—he was afraid the pressure would cause his chest cavity to cave in. After they got him out, he started to spit some blood, but when a doctor examined him, there was nothing broken. He had a bruise on his forehead where some of the sand had hit him. He was sore all over for a couple of days, but that was all. He was thankful that it hadn't happened to one of the less-muscular students as they probably would not have survived.

At the end of 1963, we summarized our family's activities in our Christmas form letter:

We are all fine and keep busy with work and study. The children are growing and changing. Ruth became a teen-ager in September, so she's really the 'big sister' now. Again this year, about every month we see her off on the train for Tokyo where she is taking 8th grade at the American School.

JohnE spends a lot of his day-hours at this desk—there's a lot to learn in 5th grade. What he enjoys most is the study of American History and Geography, and Grace, his teacher, is studying it with him. Good preparation for her becoming an American citizen next year.

Faith insists that she doesn't like studying, but she's doing quite well in 3rd grade. Both JohnE and Faith look forward to attending a regular school for the first time next year. That anticipation is also mixed with a bit of fear.

Joel does his share in keeping everyone busy, but he also keeps us entertained. He started walking a week before he was 9 months old, and we've been trying to keep up with him ever since.

We had cut back on our entertaining at Christmas 1963 and didn't have all the classes come to our house. Instead, they had a joint program in one of the villages. We did have the "home schoolers" Christmas program which had grown to be quite a large gathering. When I went to Tokyo for my regular prenatal checkup the first part of December, the doctor didn't think the baby would wait until the due date of January 10. I was eager to

be home for Christmas as Ruthie would be home from school. The doctor suggested that I enter the hospital about the middle of December and they would try to induce labor. Nothing happened, so I went home for a few days and we had our family Christmas. The next day Lars went with me to Tokyo. Again I stayed at the Swendseid's house and impatiently waited. Lars went ahead with the plan to have the Christians from the five villages at our house for the New Year's Day service. With Masako-san there to be in charge, that was no problem. I entered the hospital the evening of January 2nd and I was back in the same room where I had been when Joel was born. Leon Paul was born on January 3 at 4:12 in the afternoon—another big boy weighing 9 pounds 2 1/2 ounces. Lars had planned to come to Tokyo in time for the birth and was putting off a trip to the Bible Camp at Umegashima waiting for my call. When it got later and later, I told him he'd better go ahead to the camp. As a result, he wasn't home when I called. Because I thought he might be at Vorland's, I called there and in my excitement told Gehard. He never let Lars forget that he had heard about the birth of his son before Lars himself did. He came to Tokyo the next morning and met his new son. When he came a week later to take us home, he took care of the usual registrations at the American Embassy and at the Ward office. The other children were happy to welcome their new brother, even though the girls had sort of hoped for a sister. Joel really loved his baby brother and didn't show any jealousy. The Christians from the villages gathered at our house for a joint service on January 24, and Lars baptized Leon at that time. Gehard and Bertha Vorland and Evie Tuff were his sponsors.

I found my schedule was quite a bit busier than before with two little ones to care for while I was teaching JohnE and Faith. Joel would have been happy if he could have been with his Daddy all the time, and Lars did take him with him when he was working outside. I had always tried to finish teaching JohnE and Faith by noon each day, and they would do their seat work in the afternoon. But after Leon arrived, I had to teach whenever these two little guys would allow me to be free, and the seat-work would be done in between those sessions. As a result, our school hours extended into the afternoon. We were aiming to finish school by May 15 as our furlough was due that summer and we had much to do before leaving.



*Summer, 1964*



## 32. Furlough

It was with mixed feelings that we prepared to leave for furlough after our second term of missionary service. We would be leaving the work in the Hamana Lagoon district as another missionary couple, Virgil and Jan Hoyer, had been assigned to replace us. As we packed all of our belongings, it was with the knowledge that when we returned to Japan we would be going to another area. Except for the few months on furlough in 1958-1959, this was the only home that the children had known. They had made some very close friends amongst the Japanese children in the neighborhood and it was not easy to say good-bye to them.

Our schedule was full with all the customary *sobetsukais* in the various meeting places, and with all the packing and preparations for leaving, the last few weeks were very busy. The house had to be thoroughly cleaned before the new occupants would move in. Without Masako-san's help, it would have been an impossible task. Her job wasn't finished until after we left as she laundered and packed away all the sheets and towels and whatever else we left for her.

Several missionaries had been taking "the long way around" going home on furlough—traveling through Europe. Since the mission paid our travel from Japan to Minneapolis, the amount that it cost over that, which we paid ourselves, was not that great. We did our planning using the book *Europe on \$5 a Day* which was very helpful in keeping the cost of the trip as low as possible. A lot of our friends wondered about our decision to make such a trip with a two year old and a six month old baby. However, we thought that the three older children were of an age when they could benefit from such a trip. As it turned out, Joel and Leon proved to be good travelers so that they helped to make the trip more enjoyable rather than difficult. Because of them, we always made reservations ahead for places to stay, and never traveled at night. Some tourists traveled at night so that they would have more time for sightseeing during the day. At the end of their trip, they were exhausted, whereas we felt rested. All the changes and unsettled living was the hardest on Joel, as we had expected, but he did quite well anyway. Leon was happy all the time, had a smile for anyone and everyone and cheered up many people along the way.

We left Yokohama on June 8, 1964 on the French ship *Viet Nam*. A lot of our friends were at the pier to see us off, and as we stood by the railing to wave to them, one of Joel's shoes slipped off and fell into the ocean. We had lost one shoe of another pair some days before, which meant he was without shoes until we got to Hong Kong. The floor boards on the decks were not smooth enough for bare feet, but he wore little plastic shoe covers to keep from getting slivers. The Swendseids were on the same ship and we enjoyed relaxing and visiting with them.

The ship docked for two days in Hong Kong where we shopped and did some sightseeing. We also had a day in Saigon which was very interesting. The war had not started there yet though there was a lot of unrest. Our ship went on to Singapore, and we

disembarked to spend the day in that interesting city before boarding the BOAC (British) flight to Jerusalem that evening. We were impressed with this city with its mixture of people from the east and from the west living together in a friendly and busy community. After an enjoyable day, we took the bus to the airport, but enroute we were told that our plane would be delayed 12 hours. We had already spent our budget for the day, so instead of going to a hotel, we spent that night in the airport. It was fairly easy for the children to sleep as they stretched out on the soft seats, but the air conditioning made it so cold that we had to go outside once in awhile to get warmed up. Finally by noon the next day we boarded our plane and were off to Calcutta. That was supposed to be only a refueling stop, but again the plane had engine trouble and we had to wait for the next plane from Singapore. While waiting, BOAC provided us with a 3-course dinner catered by an Indian catering service, who worked so hard to serve us—we didn't enjoy the meal that much, but we were very impressed with the people who served it. The children were plenty tired when we finally boarded the plane that night.

We arrived in Beirut at 4 a.m. and BOAC put us up at a lovely hotel for a few hours. We flew in a small plane to Jerusalem and we were awed by the wonderful view of the country below so we soon forgot about the discomforts of the previous day. We recognized Mt. Herman, the cedars of Lebanon, the sea of Galilee, the Jordan river, and other Biblical places. This thrill continued for the next two days as we visited places in and around Jerusalem. As we were walking on the streets of old Jerusalem one afternoon, we met the Luttios, who were also on their way to the United States. We and the Swendseids traveled separately from Jerusalem—they stayed two more days while we flew to Cairo. Our main purpose in going to Egypt was to see the pyramids and the sphinx. We were impressed with these and also the Nile river, but Cairo had such an oppressive atmosphere—hot and dirty, grouchy people, and someone always asking for tips for services they forced on us. We were glad to leave after only one day and found our next stop, Athens, a pleasant contrast. Flying over the Mediterranean Sea was a beautiful sight. Maybe because of our stay in Cairo, by the time we reached Athens, Joel, Leon and I were not feeling very well, so we stayed in our hotel while Lars and the other three visited the Acropolis, the Pantheon and other historic places.

Our next stop was Rome with all its interesting places to see. When Lars and the children went to the Colosseum, they met the Swendseids again. We had been told that pickpocketing was a common occurrence in Rome, and Lars experienced it first hand. He didn't lose any money, but his Minnesota and Japanese drivers' licenses were taken.

Since we were in Rome on a Sunday, we were thankful for the spiritual nourishment at a church for English speaking people.

Vienna and Zurich were two of our favorite places—we could have stayed all summer; the cleanliness, the good food, the beautiful flowers, the music on the streets, the friendly people—not to mention all the special tourist attractions. Joel and Leon had bad coughs so we had a doctor come to see them while we were in Vienna. Joel was frightened when he saw the doctor as he thought he was going to have a shot—as he would have had in Japan, but this doctor only gave them medicine which soon took care of their cold. Leon's first tooth came through while we were there, and later in Norway, he got two more. We liked Zurich so well we stayed an extra day and cancelled our stop in Frankfurt. Here again we crossed paths with the Swendseids. On our way to visit them in their hotel one evening, Joel decided that he had had enough and turned to go back to our hotel with a determined, "I go home."

We changed planes in Frankfurt and were there long enough to have frankfurters for lunch. Leon was six months old that day. Hamburg was our next stop and as our purpose there was to buy a car to drive to Norway, Lars spent most of his time looking in used car lots. He got a very good deal on a Volkswagon. Since he had lost his drivers' license,



he had to go to the American Embassy and get a statement to show that he had applied for one. This all took longer than planned as we had arrived on Saturday, and all businesses closed at 2 p.m. so he couldn't take care of the car buying until Monday. In the meantime, Joel woke up with a bad case of conjunctivitis and I had to find a doctor to get medicine for him.

On Monday afternoon, we all piled into our newly purchased Volkswagon "bug" and managed to get all seven of us and our baggage

into it—with only one suitcase in the rack on top. We set out for our trip to Norway. It was cold, but nice and cozy in our little car. We enjoyed the scenery through northern Germany and Denmark, stayed in Denmark the first night, then drove through Sweden and spent the second night in Norway. We arrived at Lien, Lars' mother's birthplace in the afternoon. We knew that we were in the vicinity, but weren't sure where Uncle Gunnar's house and farm were. We stopped to ask, and as a man about Lars' age walked toward us, he and Lars recognized each other. They had never met before, but they both saw that they looked alike. It was Lars' cousin Narve Froyland. He and his wife, Jane, and Uncle Gunnar and Aunt Ingeborg welcomed us warmly and we had a wonderful ten days there. Lars, Ruthie, and JohnE also made a trip to Telemark where Lars' father had been born. Faith was sick that day, so she and I stayed behind. We discovered that, without being aware of it, we had named Leon after the names of his grandparents' birthplaces. Lars' mother's birthplace was *Lien*—spelled differently, but very close to the same pronunciation as Leon. The farm where Lars' father had lived as a child was named *Ingolfsrud*. We met many relatives and as a lot of them didn't speak English, we had a chance to use some of the Norwegian that we had spoken as children. It was difficult at



*On our trip to Norway, we traveled by car from Hamburg, Germany - and got all our baggage and seven of us into a little Volkswagon Bug! This picture taken at the farm where Lars' Uncle Gunnar lived - his mother's birth-place.*

first because when we tried to say something in Norwegian, the words would come out in Japanese. We had thought that I would go to northern Norway to visit my relatives but we learned that it was much farther than we had thought, and there wasn't enough time. We decided we'd save that for the next time we came to Norway. We were certain that we'd come back to this country where we felt so much at home.



*Packed Beetle departing for Hamburg*

Our return trip to Hamburg was much the same as when we went to Norway except that we spent a day in Copenhagen. We enjoyed a visit to Tivoli, but the children thought that the amusement park in Vienna had been better. We worshiped at an American Lutheran Church in Copenhagen before we left on the last leg of our journey by car. It was late when we got to the hotel in Hamburg as we had gotten caught in heavy Sunday afternoon traffic. The next morning, Lars went out early and sold the car before we left for the airport and flew to Amsterdam. We rented a car and were able to do quite a bit of sightseeing—had some problems when we couldn't make left turns and had to drive a distance in order to get around some of the canals. We flew on to Paris for two days where I spent most of the time in the hotel with the two little ones as Joel was not feeling well. The rest of them went to the usual tourist places. When we left Paris, it took us so long to get from our hotel to the airport that we missed our flight to London. We only had to wait an hour for another flight. Several other tourists had been in the same situation, and as everyone was deplaning in London, we decided we'd wait and get off after the crowd. We noticed that as people came down the aisle of the plane, their tired, gloomy faces suddenly broke into big smiles. Leon was sitting up in a basket the airline provided for him, which was on a shelf higher than the seats. He was giving everyone one of his big smiles as they came by, and for a moment they all forgot their troubles.

It was a relief to get to London where everyone spoke English. I, especially, felt at home as when we went through immigration at the airport, I went through the gate marked for "Commonwealth Passports" and the rest of the family had to go through the "Foreign Passports" gate. As Lars had been in London during the war, he stayed with Joel and Leon while the other children and I went on a tour of all the famous places.

On the morning of July 25, we packed our bags for our last flight. We felt well rested after a relaxing stay in London and enjoyed the eight hour flight to New York. Norm Neumann met us and took us to their home. They had left Japan about four years earlier.

The first item on our agenda when we got to New York was to buy a car. Norm took Lars to several used-car lots before he settled on the "fast-back" Buick. I don't remember what year or model it was—it was quite old—but he was impressed with the sound of the motor, and it did serve us very well for the year. We went to the World's Fair, and spent a delightful evening with Uncle Read and Aunt Shirley Bang. After leaving New York, and on our way to Minnesota, we stopped in Washington, D.C. where the children and I had some more history lessons. I had entered the US as an immigrant this time and would be working on papers to become an American citizen. In the meantime, I was carrying an "alien registration card"—just as we did in Japan.

We were beginning to go through the process of introducing our family to relatives that they had not met before. None of my family, except Doris, had met Lars and the children. There were many of Lars' family and relatives that I had never met, and none of the relatives had seen Joel and Leon. Our first stop was Kansas City where we stayed overnight at my brother Ralph and Miriam's house. Next we had an enjoyable week-end in Des Moines with Grandpa and Grandma Beil and Lars gave a greeting at St. John's Lutheran church at the Sunday service. We stopped at Joice, Iowa and visited my brother Jim and Helen, and sister Inez and Elvin Tweed and families. The children had now met seven new cousins besides the uncles and aunts. We stopped in the Twin Cities and reported in at the Mission Office. Lars wanted us to meet the staff in person—and their warm reception made us feel very welcome. Since our baggage from Japan had not yet arrived, we drove on to North Dakota for the Ingulsrud family reunion at Lake Metigoshe. The weather was quite cool that week, but the warmth of the family times together made up for it as they reminisced and caught up with each others' lives. After the reunion, we drove on to Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Here I was able to introduce my family to my folks and sisters RoseAline, Ruby, Joyce and Mildred and their families.

When I left for Japan to be married, I had jokingly predicted that the next time I came home, I would have six children. I didn't quite make that goal but going from being single to a family of seven was quite a change.

After almost three months of living out of suit cases, we were all ready to settle down. As we left Swift Current, Joel cried, "I want to go home." At that point, he didn't even know where home was, but it didn't take any of us long to settle down in the big mission house at 1335 Keston Street in St. Paul. Joel and Leon especially felt at home right away, proving that a house doesn't make that much of a difference. We were happy that we could have all the children home and going to regular schools.

This change in our lives was a bit of an adjustment for Ruthie—for three years, she had been home only on week-ends or vacations and had been more or less like a guest. Now she had to fit in as a regular family member again. She went to Murray High School (ninth grade) and kept very busy. She was also in confirmation instruction. JohnE and Faith were in sixth and fourth grades at the St. Anthony Park Elementary School. At first, Faith was ready to go back to studying at home, but she soon adjusted and did well. She even got on the Student Council. All three children took piano lessons from Mrs. Markley, a wonderful teacher. Joel learned to talk and Leon learned to walk during that year. There's no record on how it happened, but Leon had a black eye for his first birthday. We kept in touch with Japan that fall by watching the Tokyo Olympics on TV.

Lars had a busy year. He took a course at the Seminary during the fall quarter, and the rest of the time had a busy deputation schedule. He even had appointments during



*First day of school in St. Anthony Park, 1964.*

Advent and Lent and Holy Week. By the middle of May, he had presented the cause of world missions in seventy-four different congregations—from Eastern Canada and the New York area, to Alberta and Saskatchewan. (He added to that number as he preached every Sunday on our trip to the west coast.) He found it exciting and commented,

"The church is growing; most of the Christians are trying to hold that middle ground between extremes and faithfully using their talents to serve our living Lord and His Church."

The children and I went with Lars to his speaking appointments when it was close enough to drive and get back in time for school. The children didn't seem to have difficulty making friends. A lot of their friends were other missionary children. There were several mission homes in the St. Anthony Park area, and we loved living in this friendly district. We were happy to have family members visit us during the year. Dad and Mom spent a few days with us in February. During the Easter vacation, Ruth, JohnE and Faith went by train to Des Moines and spent the time with Grandpa and Grandma Beil. The boys and I went with Lars to Alberta as he had speaking appointments there. While in Edmonton, we were sponsors for Mark and Timothy Yamamoto's baptism—the twin sons of Isao and Toshiko. As Lars had more appointments, I came back by train and arrived in St. Paul about the same time that the other three children came back from Des Moines. They had seen the movie, *Mary Poppins* and brought the record back with them.

Ruth was confirmed on June 6th, and Grandpa and Grandma Beil were able to come from Des Moines for the celebration dinner. Lillian Anderson, Ruth's godmother was also with us.

By the end of our furlough, we had visited in the homes of all of our brothers and sisters, total of fifteen. The children met all of their cousins except two, and Lars and I saw all of our aunts and uncles except three—and cousins by the dozens. But the visits with the four Grandmas and the two Grandpas was the best of all.

On May 19, I had an appointment at the Immigration and Naturalization Service to finalize the procedure for obtaining American citizenship. The requirement of five years



Ruth's confirmation: Grace, Lillian, Ruth & Grandma

of residency before obtaining citizenship had been waived for missionaries and others whose work kept them in a foreign country for an indefinite period. During the questioning, the judge asked me to recite *The Bill of Rights*, the first ten amendments to the constitution. I had diligently studied the constitution in preparation for this day, but I had not memorized the amendments. When I couldn't recite them, he scolded me saying, "You're going to be raising children as American citizens and you don't know the constitution?"

He told me I should know them by the time of the swearing in, so I faithfully studied and memorized. At the swearing in ceremony a couple weeks later, he didn't even ask for it. In relating this incident to

other citizens, I didn't find any who could recite the amendments—except for my brother Ralph, who had just recently gone through the naturalization process.

There were quite a few other “aliens” who became citizens the same day that I did. A part of the ceremony that I did not appreciate was having to denounce my allegiance to Canada. The only reason I was changing my citizenship was for the family's sake. It was easier to deal with only one consulate. At one time, it might have made it necessary for Joel and Leon to prove their citizenship since they had been born in a foreign country and had an alien mother. But that had been changed—if they had an American passport, they were bona fide citizens.

We spent a lot of time shopping as it was easier to find suitable clothes of the right sizes for the children and for ourselves in the United States. We had to plan ahead for a five year supply of clothes and other equipment, so we had a lot of packing to do to get ready to leave in June. School was out on June 11 and we left the next day for our trip to the west coast. We stopped in Edmore for a few days, then spent about three weeks in Canada. We were in Swift Current and Edmonton and Lars preached each Sunday along the way. We enjoyed the wonderful scenery through Banff and Jasper parks on our way to Vancouver. After a day or two, we drove to Seattle and Portland and finally to Sacramento. While there, we drove to Los Angeles and visited (Ole) Glenn and Phyllis, and the Weertzes entertained us in Roger Williams' home. We felt very fortunate to have so many wonderfully hospitable relatives and friends all over—from the Neumanns and the Read Bangs in New York to the Carl Beils in Sacramento, our ports of entry and departure, and from the Ralph Nelsons in Kansas City to the Lloyd Christensons in Edmonton, and many others in between. We had driven over 5000 miles and had spent only one night in a motel. Our old Buick didn't let us down once—we passed more cars than passed us. It was a good car and we hated to part with it. Though Lars had a couple of good offers for it in St. Paul, we weren't able to sell it in California, so we gave it to the pastor of Carl Beil's church to use as a second car. After Lars' last deputation talk in the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, one of our sponsoring churches, Carl and Norma took us to San Francisco where we boarded the *President Cleveland* on July 15 for the two week trip to Japan. We had one day in Hawaii, and even there, relatives showed us Hawaiian hospitality. My uncle Julian Austring, and cousin Bob and their families showed us around the island and treated us to wonderful meals before returning us to the ship in the evening.



### 33. *A Year of Transition*

**W**e had been assigned to start new work along the Chuo railway line up towards Tajimi. During the year of preparation for this work, we lived in a large mission house in Tokugawa Cho, in the large city of Nagoya. It was a house that had been built by one of the early United Lutheran Church missionaries. (Since our missions were working towards merger, there was more and more of this sharing of property.) We had arrived in Yokohama on July 29, a typical hot day. We realized that we had forgotten how hot it does get in Japan. After staying overnight in our “honeymoon” hotel while waiting for our baggage, we took the train to Hamamatsu. We loaded all our belongings that we had stored there onto trucks, and the children found time to look up their old friends. After having supper with the Hoyers we took the train to Nagoya. Joel seemed to enjoy the train rides more than all the traveling we had done in the US and Canada, and on the ship. We had been telling him for so long that we were going to Japan, so when we got there, he couldn’t quite figure out what Japan was since we got on the train and traveled some more. We moved into our new home and unpacked the essentials and got somewhat settled. Lars went to Kakegawa and got the car, an Austin, that Vorlands sold us. The heat was so oppressive, it was difficult to do anything. When Leon woke up with his head and face covered with heat rash, we decided to leave for the lake after only five days. We had nothing to keep us there during August, so we were glad to head for a cooler place. We had another enjoyable summer at our favorite place, and this summer, JohnE got to be quite good on the water skis. The month we were able to spend at Nojiri proved to be a good time of “reorientation.” There was an adjustment to make even after the second furlough.

In September, the children started school at the Nagoya International School, a new school that was only in its second year. They were using an old Japanese school building, but plans were already underway for a new building on a new site. There were only four in Ruth’s class, which made it quite different from what she had been used to, but aside from missing her hostel friends, she adjusted and learned to enjoy this new experience. JohnE and Faith were especially excited over having so many different teachers as the school was departmentalized from fifth grade and up. There were 100 students and ten full time teachers, a ratio that assured the students of considerable individual attention. They commuted to school by city bus—about an hour’s travel. We were very thankful for this unexpected blessing of being able to keep all of the children at home. Before we knew of this situation, I had started preparing the children—training them to take care of themselves—for the time that they would be living in the hostel.

It wasn’t long before Joel and Leon settled down and Joel quit asking to go back to St. Paul. He was a different boy when we were not traveling. He was quite concerned about the fact that he couldn’t understand or speak Japanese. We were hoping that he would find some Japanese friends close by, but that didn’t happen until the following winter after I had visited some of the neighbors who had children close to Joel’s age. He helped

Leon learn English and really drilled him on new words. In a letter to our families in the spring of 1966, I noted: "The two of them play so well together now. Leon is getting to be a real comic."

We had gone back to our old place of work at Mikkabi one Sunday as the churches in that area had a joint meeting to welcome us back. It was great to see everyone again. Lars found his schedule very much lighter as he was just beginning to survey the area to which we had been assigned to start new work. In the meantime, we were able to get a good Japanese teacher and we both studied with her once a week. Lars also helped the local Japanese pastor who wasn't ordained yet, and he assisted at the Union church. After doing some surveying along the Chuo railway line, by October Lars found a good piece of land for a missionary house in Kozoji.

The chairman of our mission, Leroy Johnsrud, came with a committee and approved the purchase of the land, but before anything more was done, we were told to wait. There was another plan for work in the city of Toyota, and the possibility that Lars should go there instead. This plan involved the building of a Labor Center by some of the heads of the automobile factories who wanted the church to have a significant part in running the center. The blind pastor of the Lutheran church in Toyota was to head up this new type of ministry, but they also wanted a missionary to help. Many thought that Lars should be that missionary, so until the decision became final, we were to wait. This decision had to be made by the national church, and it wasn't finalized until the following spring. As a result, we "hung loose" until late spring in 1966—Lars didn't have a specific assignment. The children teased him about being unemployed. It was almost like a second year of furlough, and turned out to be a very nice year for the family. The uncertainty, however, was difficult as we didn't know how to plan.

In the meantime, we enjoyed the fellowship of several other foreigners and missionaries in Nagoya. There was a very fine community spirit in the foreign community as everyone was so thankful to have a school. The children, too, had many friends in the other missionary families. Twice a month, the Youth Group met at one of the homes following the English worship service. Lars filled in for other pastors or missionaries here and there, helped at the Lutheran Hour Office, and was the leader for the English services at Union Church for a couple of months. He was on the Building Committee for the new International School, and became Scout Master, though he had never been a Boy Scout himself.

Another change that we were enjoying in this third term was the new Bullet train that cut travel time between Nagoya and Tokyo to three hours. It had taken five hours until then. I had my first ride on it in October when I went to Yokohama to see Harold and Dorothy Engen who were on their way to India. Also right after Thanksgiving, we drove to Kyoto on the new expressway—the first part of the system that would eventually link Tokyo and Osaka. We thoroughly enjoyed that first drive on this new highway. Lars said it was the first time he had relaxed while driving in Japan. We enjoyed the scenery on the two and a half hour trip as we were able to avoid all the heavy traffic that had been a part of our driving experiences until then. Later, I went by Bullet train to Kyoto to go to the Baptist Hospital for a checkup, and that trip took only fifty minutes, traveling at over one hundred miles an hour. I took Joel with me as he had been longing to ride on this train and could ride free.

We had noticed a rise in the cost of living in Japan, too. We were told that the prices had gone up during the Olympics and never came down again. Plain hamburger meat was \$4.00 per pound, so when we were able to buy imported turkey for 75 cents per pound, it was a real bargain. This was also the first time that we had been able to buy imported turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas.



Since we didn't have any of our own church activities at Christmas time, we were not nearly as busy as we had been other years. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, we received a phone call from two young women from England who were traveling around the world. They were spending a couple of days in Nagoya and wanted to go to church on Christmas Eve so they called and asked if there was an English Protestant service anywhere. There wasn't any, so we invited them to come and have supper with us and go with us to the Japanese church for their candle light service. They did, and enjoyed it and we enjoyed having them. On Christmas Day, we spent a quiet day, opening our gifts after breakfast.



*Tokugawa Cho house, Nagoya, Christmas 1965*

It had taken me a few Christmases to get used to Lars' custom of opening gifts on Christmas morning rather than on Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve at home had always been so special for me and it was difficult to make the change. I had to have something special on Christmas Eve, so we started having a candle light buffet supper and a time of sharing some special blessings of the previous year. Later, when we always had a service at church on Christmas Eve, it worked out much better not to have our family Christmas then. We have continued our own tradition of the candle light buffet, and then opening our gifts on Christmas morning.

On the afternoon of Christmas Day, the Hyland family came from Tokyo and had Christmas dinner with us and stayed overnight. They brought Masako-san with them and it was very special to have her join our family Christmas again. She was working at the Children's Hostel in Tokyo.

During the Christmas vacation, Lars and Ruth, JohnE and Faith spent a day skiing at Ibuki, but the rest of the time, we relaxed and enjoyed the break from school. Ruth was especially quiet for some days as she bumped her elbow on the corner of the kitchen cupboard one evening, and the pain caused her to faint. She fell backwards and hit her head on the floor and had a headache for about three days afterwards. Her comment: "Now I can tell the girls I fainted."

We didn't have to travel any distance to go the Annual Conference in January 1966 as it was held at the International Hotel in Nagoya. That meant we could stay at home and still attend all of the sessions. I took Joel and Leon with me as they had a room set aside for the children to play. I came home and made supper for the other three children each day, put the boys to bed and went back to the evening sessions. It was all very pleasant, but I was exhausted by the end of the conference. Lars got on a couple more committees which meant he would have more meetings to attend.

As the year went on, the children got more and more involved in activities at Nagoya International School. They were enjoying their experiences there so when the school board decided that they would add another grade to the High School—eleventh grade—for the coming year, Ruth was very happy. We were too, as it meant that she could stay at home again. We felt satisfied that she was getting good instruction in her classes even

though the school lacked some facilities. The board had not been able to procure land for the new school yet, so the new building was still a long way off. The old buildings didn't seem to be a problem for the students. Perhaps a lot of them felt as Faith did when she said, "Oh, I don't want a new school. Then we'd have to have central heating, and we couldn't gather around the stove."

Basketball became a big part of school life, too, as both boys' and girls' teams were formed. As sports were never JohnE's forte, he was not selected for the team. However, typical of the good school spirit, the coach and the rest of the players didn't want him to be left out, so they made him their manager. Another less athletic boy was made official score keeper. They were able to go to all the games and had fun with the rest of them.

We celebrated our fifth wedding anniversary by going to a Chinese "smorgasbord" with the whole family. Since the traditional designation for the fifth anniversary is "wood," and another tradition lists "clocks," we bought ourselves a cuckoo clock to commemorate this milestone. By this time, it seems we were supposed to have some knowledge about raising children as we were asked to be on a TV program that dealt with the subject. On this half-hour program, they interviewed two families—each family had fifteen minutes. The program was taped three days before it was broadcast, so we took the children after school one day for the interview. We had a short rehearsal first but when it came to the actual taping, the interviewer changed the questions somewhat and used some words we weren't too familiar with, and we did some stumbling. The children did fine and we hoped that they made up for us. We felt that we had flubbed a good opportunity to give a positive Christian witness. However, later, we heard from someone who had seen the program and it seemed that it had some effect. Lars had mentioned during the interview that we feel that our children belong to God—they are only entrusted to us to raise and then to allow them to follow God's plan for their lives.



*"Big Shots"—Winter 1965-66*

A Christian couple in Kyushu had heard this program at a time when their son wanted to leave and go to Tokyo for further study. They resisted his leaving since he would be so far from home. After hearing what Lars said about parents not owning their children, they were willing to let him go.

During this first year, I found my situation to be quite different from my first two terms in Japan. Instead of being in active missionary work like I was in my first term, or teaching the children at home like I did in my second term, I was a regular housewife and homemaker.

I took in school activities, PTA, and English church on Sunday afternoons at Union Church besides attending the Japanese church (Fukkatsu church) near our house on Sunday mornings.

I didn't have a maid and didn't need one as the girls were becoming very helpful. However, in March 1966, we got the help of another type of "maid." We purchased our first automatic dish washer. While we were on furlough, Lars had suggested that if I cut his and the boys' hair, he would buy a

dishwasher for me with the money we would save. On one of his trips to Tokyo, he bought an English newspaper at the train station and noticed an ad for a portable dishwasher for sale. He decided that if this agency that handled used American appliances was near enough to the place where he was going in Tokyo, he would go and look at it—otherwise, he'd take it as a sign that we weren't to have it. When he called about it, he found that it was only a block from where he would be—so he went and looked at it, discussed it with us at home, and decided to buy it. We had started a "dishwasher fund" with some Christmas gifts we had received. The day that the dishwasher came, we received a check in the mail from a church in Wisconsin with a belated Christmas gift—"use it for something you all want"—and it was just the amount lacking in our fund to pay for it. Ruth and Faith were very happy that they wouldn't have to spend so much time in the kitchen each evening as their home-work was keeping them busy. The time that they did spend helping could now be used for more creative tasks like cooking and baking.

Our assignment continued to be uncertain until May 1966. The Tokai Lutheran Church which had been formed in 1959 had now become "The Tokai District of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church." In March 1966, at the District Convention, Lars' good friend and former coworker, Nakashima Sensei became the District President. The national church body was now responsible for missionary assignments, and the national convention was held in May. At that time, our assignment to evangelistic work in the Toyota area became final. There had been a lot of discussion with regard to the planned Labor Center in Toyota. When it was first mentioned, the plan of the factory leaders who wanted a center for the workers, was to build a facility that would include a gymnasium, a dormitory, and a chapel and parsonage. A couple of these men knew Pastor Ogata well, and they thought that the church should run this proposed center—with no strings attached. However, as the talks progressed, it was apparent that some of the head people were not in favor of the church being entirely in charge of the center. The church officials, too, were wary of going into a situation where it might not be certain who was in charge. Also they were not eager to take on another institution. After several months of negotiations, it was decided that the Labor Center would be built by the factories concerned, and the local congregation would be in charge of the program at the center. Pastor Ogata was to be the director, and Lars would assist in this specialized ministry as well as in the other areas of the congregation's ministry.

We were glad to finally have this decision made so that we could get on with planning where we would live, and getting a house built. The children were a little disappointed at first since they would be farther from school. The idea of moving again seemed to bother Joel—he had become attached to our home in Tokugawa Cho. We all liked the house and that area very much, but we knew we had to go where our work would be. Joel talked about the coming move a lot and wondered who was going to live in our present house. He also still talked about St. Paul and informed us that he was going to live there when he grew up. He was making more friends, though, four of whom helped him celebrate his fourth birthday—Bobby Calcote, Paul Hoshizaki, Joy and Steven Davidson.

After May 30th 1966, we had two teen-agers. We celebrated JohnE's thirteenth birthday by going to a Chinese restaurant at the International Hotel. Laura Bang Seymour (a cousin of Selma's) had been spending ten days with us on her world trip, and helped us celebrate. Besides his school work, JohnE continued with violin lessons with a Japanese teacher—he even played in an ensemble at Kinjo school on one occasion.

Since Lars' assignment was unsettled, he had some extra time so he accepted the position of Scout Master for the Nagoya International School Boy Scout Troop.

David Olson, a member of the NIS Boy Scout troop in the 1960's wrote some of his remembrances of Lars as Scout Master. The following account shows Lars teaching in a different situation from his usual mission work, but the influence he had on some of the boys in the Scout troop showed that "mission" can take various forms:

Lars took over as Scout Master in the fall of 1965. After some camping trips during the year, we lined up one Friday and he told us, "I've been watching you fellows camp this year, and most of you act like kids. Camping is a man's business, but you fellows just fool around."

Then he told us about the Tenryu River. "I've checked, and no one has ever gone down it (on rafts) before." Lars explained the 50-Miler program. Then he said that, given our present state of camping skills, we'd never be able to do that. But, that we would spend the rest of the year training. He showed us a pole. This was to be a mountain-climbing stick cum paddle for the river expedition. After every campout, we would burn the name of the camp-site into the pole, just like the Japanese do. (that amazed me). He then explained the 5-BX program. After that, we got busy personalizing our poles.

We were utterly amazed. It sounded too good to be true. We talked about it constantly, not really believing that it was happening to us. But, I had no objection to starting 5-BX, and nobody had any objection to the regimen of camp-outs. I don't remember all the camp-sites. In the fall, we went up to Nojiri and did some logging one week-end. In order to toughen us up (our ears strained to hear what would come next), he said we should do some snow camping in Asuke during the winter. I believe we climbed Mount Ena in the spring. Then we camped somewhere in the Toyota hinterlands, with a ten-mile hike the next day, followed by another overnight camp. There were no memorable features to the terrain. It was strictly basic training. Lars said that anyone who couldn't make the ten-mile hike couldn't come on the 50-Miler.

Yet, behind his back, we were playing our boyish games. We had developed the image of Lars as someone who parachuted down over enemy lines and set up radio posts. Since he used some military gear—olive drab sleeping bag, olive drab canned heat—we fantasized that we were part of his paratroop team, dropped over enemy territory. And, given the facts, we were not far from wrong.

Lars always told us when it was okay to bring canned heat, and when he wanted us to rely on our fire-building skills. I can't remember anyone disobeying this. Poor fire-builders had to ask for help from others. Lars showed us how to find dry wood on rainy days. When he knew we could build fires, and he wanted us to camp for speed, to see how far we could hike in a day, then he said it was okay to use canned heat.

Then came the 50-Miler. This was a great disappointment to me, since after the accident under the bridge, Norman pulled us out and took us home. This happened on the first day, under the first bridge we came to. All the other rafts had pushed off except for the Olson's (Norman, David, Danny) and the Perkins'/Offner. Rev. Perkins had strung a rope between his raft and the raft his son and Steve Offner were on—(not a safety measure that Lars had suggested). Then, the rafts flowed on either side of the pier of the first bridge we came to. Rev. Perkins was thrown into the water, swept downstream, and was trapped in a whirlpool in

the bend of the river. Steve P. and Steve O. were trapped by the “safety” rope and were pinned to the pier. Their cries for help grew weaker and weaker. Eventually, Lars stopped the rafts and sent Larry Kelly back to see what had happened. We tied Larry to a rope and held one end tight on the bank, so he could swim out to the pier without being washed away. Then he cut the Steves loose with a pocket knife. Then Norman pulled us out while the rest went down the river.

On Sunday mornings we always had a very simple service, where he would read just one verse from his New Testament, relate it to a personal experience, and then we would sing a hymn. The service was never more than that, but it left a profound impression on us. People like Kenji Sano always participated. I think it left an impression on him, too. Kenji’s family situation was anything but happy at the time so when I say that Kenji was moved, what is my precise memory? I remember being at the Junior Activities Building (West Kamiyama, Nojiri) which we routinely used during our fall camp-outs—and having a brief service, as mentioned above. The hymn may have been “Fairest Lord Jesus.” I know we sang that on these occasions. Then Lars read a verse. Then he told us about his parachuting days—how, even on a practice mission, one faced death. If there were five thousand troops making the drop, there would always be one or two guys who didn’t survive, even during training. He told us how, right before he jumped out of the plane, he would place his life in God’s hands. A very simple, honest story which would have been ruined by liturgy. And I have the recollection that Kenji Sano was deeply moved by this.

In retrospect, I see that Lars had everything planned out, everything calculated. He knew just how hard to push us, how to encourage us, how to silently shame us out of our boyish foolishness. We saw him as an amazing leader who knew how to make men of us. We would have followed him anywhere.



*Lars with Nagoya Boy Scouts—Spring 1966*

Since the house that had been our home in Hamamatsu was vacant after the Hoyers had moved to Washizu, the mission decided to have that house torn down and rebuild it in Toyota. The Hamamatsu lot was to be sold and the selling price was the same with or without the house. The mission would save some money by tearing it down and using it again. It took two months to get through all the red tape of registering the land in Toyota as residential land, and house plans made and approved by the mission and Toyota city. So finally by the middle of July they were able to start work on tearing down the house. Since Lars had been busy dealing with all these details, he hadn't been able to do much in our new assignment, though we had visited the Koromo church a few times. The Gilbertsons were due back in Japan in August which meant that we had to move out of their house. The Knutsons were leaving for an early furlough for medical reasons, so their house in Kariya would be empty. It was decided that we should live there until our house in Toyota was ready—the plan was by the first part of November. We moved to Kariya—about an hour out of Nagoya by car—after the usual cleaning and packing. We unpacked very little, just the bare essentials, as we knew we would be “camping” there for only three to four months. Since the summer heat was already oppressive, we left for the lake by the end of July.

Lars had a new boat constructed while we lived in Nagoya. He had found a design for a boat that he liked, and was able to find a company that built it to his specifications. We painted the boat white, and named it *Shiro Kaze* (White Wind). Earlier that year, Lars had bought a van that had only two rows of seats. Since he did so much hauling of equipment—for ourselves and others, he needed a truck-like vehicle, especially with all the moving we did in 1966. He had thought that he could put the boat on top of the van and haul it to the lake, but he was not able to get the necessary permission. He quickly got a trailer made and pulled the boat behind the van. We left Nagoya in the evening and drove all night. In some places the roads were terrible, so it was not a pleasant trip. Going through one of the many tunnels on Highway 19, we barely crept along. The boat was almost as wide as the tunnel, and Lars had to concentrate solely on his driving, watching in the side mirrors to be sure the boat didn't hit the walls of the tunnel. We held our breaths every time one of the tires hit a pothole and the boat leaned a little closer to the walls. We had other nerve-wracking moments when we met other cars or trucks on the narrow roads. We finally arrived at Lake Nojiri at seven the next morning, July 27, and started settling in at cabin 119.

The next few days were very busy as we rearranged the cabin. We moved the kitchen to the room where Lars had his work-shop, and made the old kitchen into the wash-room. The dining room was moved next to the kitchen, so the living room was now L-shaped. We had brought an old fridge and a gas stove (mission discards) so our kitchen was modernized! Later in the summer, we bought a small potbellied stove for the “family room” part of the living room. This came in handy when the temperature dropped and we needed to take the chill off the rooms.

We had brought our old spin-dryer washing machine to the cabin the year before, which meant that we no longer needed to have a maid to help. Another change was the location of the outdoor toilet—it was moved to the back side of the house, with a short walk-way from the wash-room door. It still took Joel and Leon some time before they had courage enough to venture out to the out house by themselves. When Joel was six or seven years old, he was trying to get up enough courage to go out alone. He said, “I don't know why I'm so scared. Daniel wasn't even scared when he was in the lions' den.”

Leon said, “But Daniel had an angel with him.”

“Don't you think you have an angel with you, too?” I asked.

Leon's answer came quickly: “Angels don't go to the bathroom!”

After getting the cabin fairly settled, Lars and JohnE worked on the boat and soon had it ready to launch. The whole family went for a ride on the maiden voyage. We spent many happy hours with the boat during that month, and by the end of the summer, everyone except Joel and Leon had become quite proficient on water-skis. Lars was very pleased when he



*Shiro Kaze on Lake Nojiri—Summer 1966 or 1967*

finally got four of us up and skiing behind the boat together. A favorite way to have a picnic was to invite another family to join us and we went across the lake to a quiet cove where we could ski without bothering anyone else. We'd have our picnic lunch together before returning to our side of the lake. We also often entertained friends for breakfast, and then they joined us for skiing before the breeze came up around noon. Lars, with the help of JohnE and Ruth, helped many of the young people—and sometimes their parents—learn to water-ski. Besides the skiing, the children also advanced in their swimming classes.

With all the other activities in the community of the Nojiri Lake Association, it was a busy summer. The Lutherans continued their tradition of having three meetings during the summer and we enjoyed this opportunity to learn to know more of the missionaries of other synods. The children, too, made new friends as they joined in activities planned for each age group. Lars served on the Executive Committee as Property Chairman, but he still had time to spend working on boats and other equipment at the boat storage building, often helping other people with their boats. He interrupted his vacation and spent about ten days back in Kariya helping with the work at Koromo Church.

We remember the summer of 1966 because of the frequent earthquakes which we felt. For the previous year or so, there had been an unusual amount of earthquake activity in a mountain area about fifty miles from the lake. We felt slight ones several times a week, and a couple of strong ones woke us up at night. Lars discovered that his instinct for self-preservation proved stronger than the instinct to protect his family as he found himself on his way out of the cabin after a strong quake woke him—leaving the family behind. The family never let him forget that incident.

At the end of the summer, the last day at the cabin was always the most difficult and busy. Everything in the cabin had to be put away and the boat had to be brought in and put away in the storage building. We started a tradition of going to the small inn near our cabin, the *Sunamakan* where we had *sukiyaki* and relaxed in the *ofuro* on our last evening. The proprietor of the inn and Lars became good friends after Lars sold him a Mercury motor for his boats. They often brought us vegetables from their garden.

We returned to Kariya on September third. Joel and Leon didn't call this house "home"—they insisted that it was "Knutson's house." The first couple of weeks that we were there, Leon often asked if we could go home. They made the adjustment, though, and were soon enjoying the larger yard and playing with the dog that Knutsons had left.





## 34. *New Work, New House*

**W**e were all extremely busy for the rest of 1966. Lars was starting classes and helping with the preaching at Koromo Church (Toyota) besides supervising the building of the new house. The mission had bought the lot for our house from Mr. Hotta. Some years before, they had lived on that lot but the house had been destroyed in the typhoon of 1959. Now, he and his wife and son and daughter-in-law lived on another corner of their land with the persimmon orchard between their place and our lot. The name of the area was 'Kakimoto Cho'—*kaki* being the Japanese word for persimmon. There were other persimmon orchards in the neighborhood, too. Since there were no trees on our lot, Lars had made arrangements to move some of the trees and bushes from the house-lot in Hamamatsu. There was a good—though small—lawn there also, and he planned to move the sod to our new yard. However, when they came to move it, someone else had beaten them to it—the lawn had been stolen.

Ruth, JohnE and Faith commuted to NIS by electric train, bus and taxi from our temporary home. They left home at 7 a.m. and returned by 4:40 p.m. Joel and Leon kept me busy as I took care of the family and made preparations for the new house. I was starting to get back into active mission work, too, and began giving the Bible Studies for the women's group at Koromo Church. I enjoyed a two day break in October when I attended our Missionary Ladies' Retreat at Gotemba. A guidance counselor from ASIJ was the main speaker and as she spoke about raising children, I had a chance to reflect on my particular task of raising three who had become my children when I was married (we have never used the term *stepchildren*) and two to whom I had given birth.

On November 19th, our house was finally ready and we moved in. We had been moving furniture for some days before, but on the last day, we collected the rest of our belongings from the Tokugawa Cho house, from the Kariya house and from storage. During this busy time, Joel and Leon stayed at Davidson's in Okazaki. We had expected to move in a couple weeks earlier so had set November 20th as our Open House for the church members. Even though we still had a lot of settling to do, we went ahead with those plans and on Sunday afternoon about twenty people came to help us celebrate. Our dear friend and helper from Hamamatsu days, Shibata-san, also came. She was eager to see the renovated house, but she was perhaps more interested in seeing the children that she had helped raise. They were still very special to her, and they had not forgotten her.

We were very happy with our new house and enjoyed making it into our "home." After two and a half years, we were able to unpack all of our belongings. In rebuilding the house, the contractor had raised the roof so that we now had a full second story. Now we had four bedrooms and a trunk room, and also a small room for the mission's Audio-Visual Library for which Lars was responsible. We also had more room downstairs as the living room had been widened. Instead of a space heater in our living room, we now had a wall-furnace.



*Koromo Church, downtown Toyota City*

The city of Toyota was called the “Detroit of Japan” for its numerous automobile factories. Toyota and Detroit were sister-cities. The Motomachi factory was a short distance east of our house and we looked out over its parking lot from our south windows. We were fairly close to a highway to Nagoya which made it convenient for the children to go to school by bus. Although the distance was only about fifteen miles, traffic was heavy and frequent bus stops made it a one-hour commute.

Even though we had moved out of Nagoya, we continued our contacts in the city through NIS activities, and our responsibilities at Union Church. As we got busier in Toyota, we had to give up those responsibilities, but we still had a lot of contact with the foreign community. Ruth and JohnE continued to go in to Union Church on the Sundays that the Youth Group met. Our own Aichi Ken mission group had grown so that when we had our fellowship meetings in homes, we’d have a full house.

Lars soon found that his work was going to be quite different this term. Instead of starting a new church, he was working with a self-supporting church of more than fifty members, many of whom were very active. There was a large kindergarten connected with the church. Their outreach program included ten cottage meetings each month. As soon as the new Labor Center was built, they became involved in that ministry to the many factory workers in the area. The Labor Center, *Iko no Ie* was officially opened on December 11.

Along with getting settled into our new home, we made preparations for Christmas. Since we weren’t involved much with classes yet, we had only one small class to our house for a Christmas party. We had our own Christmas Eve candle light buffet, and on Christmas Day, which was a Sunday, went to Koromo Church for the Christmas worship service. After the service, we all had dinner together—*osushi* with raw fish and octopus, and a variety of other tasty dishes—followed by a program of songs, talks, and games. That evening, Masako-san came to spend Christmas with us. We had more guests for our family Christmas the next day—four of the single lady missionaries joined us for our turkey dinner. In the evening, Pastor Ogata and his family came and we spent a quiet evening listening to the recordings of Handel’s Messiah.

We already felt very much at home in our new setting. After all of the activities of the Christmas season were over, we were happy to relax for awhile. It didn’t last long, however, as four days after Christmas, Ruthie ended up in the hospital. She had spent a

few days in the hospital in June and missed the last two days of school. She had pains in her back and when we took her to the doctor, X rays revealed that her left lung was 15% collapsed, a condition known as spontaneous pneumothorax, a congenital condition caused by the rupture of a nodule on the surface of the lung. Other missionaries had introduced us to a Christian doctor, Dr. Kawahara, and he had already doctored our family several times. Now when he treated Ruthie, we learned that he was a lung specialist. Since he was also fluent in English, we were very thankful that Ruthie was under his good care. After three days of bed-rest, her lung inflated again, and she was able to come home. But when it happened again after Christmas, she had to have surgery to “patch” the lung.

As family and church responsibilities increased, sometimes it seemed like we were running in circles. The children were busy at school, and since going to and from school took so much of their time, they weren’t at home much except on week-ends. Lars seldom had an evening at home, and though Monday was supposed to be his day off, he was often called to fix someone’s equipment. In fact, we celebrated our sixth wedding anniversary by going to Tokyo to fix appliances for missionaries there. I wasn’t able to go with Lars to the annual conference in January as Joel was sick, and Ruthie was still in the hospital.

The end of March, we purchased our first Toyota car—a used station wagon. We thought that if we were going to live in the midst of the Toyota Motor company, we should probably drive one of their products. Lars wasn’t very impressed with the first one—a *Crown*— that we owned, but later he had nothing but praise for the Toyota workmanship and for the cars they produced.

Joel and Leon were happy to be settled in our new house and weren’t interested in going many places. They were content just to stay at home. In April, Joel started kindergarten— at our church. While he was at *yochien* we had only Leon at home. I was often thankful that I still had one little one at home to give me a reason to stay home more.

Our Christmas letter of 1967 summarized our year and the children wrote their own parts which showed what their interests were. Excerpts from that letter follow:

Each day and week has been filled with a variety of work and activity. It seems that getting settled in a new house, a new community, and new work takes a long time. After one year, however, we feel settled at last...

Leon, who will be 4 in January reports:

We had Sparky and then he got lost. Then we had Toyopet and he got lost. Toyopet was our kitty. Then we got Skippy. The worms ate our flowers. One day we went to Mikkabi and picked mikans. The other morning it was Thanksgiving and we just passed Halloween. I can’t wait for Christmas. The big ones they can wait for Christmas.

From 5 1/2 year old Joel:

I go to Japanese kindergarten now. I like it real well and some of my friends are Tomo-chan, Tachiya-kun, Mikiyo-kun, and Ayako-chan. I play outside and inside I play with blocks and make houses and apartments and stores. At home, I play with Leon and Skippy. Sometimes when I stay home from kindergarten I study with Mommy. I study about words.

Faith, who will be a teen-ager in January writes:

Things at school get busier with the planning of Christmas programs, concerts, etc. I like reading and listening to almost any kind of music, but I like classical music best. This year all three of us have joined the school band. I play the mellaphone and enjoy it very much. I hope others have enjoyed this year as much as I have.

JohnE (14 1/2) adds:

It seems that everyone is so busy around here. At home we are trying to get so many things done at once. At school, there are too many activities for a school that size, but we seem to live. Every morning, we have to get up at six. We take the bus and it takes about 45 minutes. We have to leave early because of traffic. It has been very cold here these past days, but still I'm happy here.

Ruth (17) also adds her bit:

Time goes so quickly for me, but Christmas always makes me slow down and think more seriously of God and His great gift to us. I have been very busy these past months with school and home activities. Being in the first graduating class from Nagoya International School, Student Council President, and on the committee for the first year book and class ring, school life is both vigorous and interesting for me. Next year, I plan to go to a college in Des Moines, Iowa, and if possible stay with Grandmother Beil. We all miss Grandpa Beil since he passed away last May. I look forward to my stay in the USA, but every day reminds me of something else which I will miss here in Japan.

Lars wrote:

We have now been in the Center for a year, and it is very interesting work. Some of the lonely boys are finding friends there. Some who long for reconciliation are coming to church. Through the various club activities we come in contact with many people regularly whom we otherwise would never meet personally.

At the church, we need to build, and in three years of fund-raising, we have only one-tenth of what is needed, so some of the members are getting discouraged. We believe, however, that so long as we are in God's will, doing His business, He will provide the resources.

Yesterday was Thanksgiving and when we count our blessings we can only lift our hearts in gratitude to God for all the undeserved favors we have received. As I try to teach the meaning of the Christmas hymns to the students in my English classes, I am drawn again to the joy that we have in the fact that God loves us and sent His Son.

My part of the letter told of my trip to Canada in July to join my family in celebrating Dad and Mom's Golden Wedding Anniversary. My folks had continued farming from the city until that summer of 1967 when they sold the farm. Dad remarked that it was the

first time in fifty years that he had made any money on the farm. It was hard to see the farm home sold to someone not connected with the family, but there was no one in the family to take it over. There had been many years of hard work, and now they were spending the rest of their lives enjoying their home in Swift Current. All of the family was together for a few days. My sister, Doris, had just arrived from South Africa on her regular furlough and with all the others, it was a great reunion and celebration. It had been thirteen years since our last reunion.

Masako-san, our former maid, was able to come and stay while I was on the trip to Canada, so with Ruth doing most of the cooking, and everyone helping, the family was well cared for during the three and a half weeks that I was gone. I had flown to



*Nelson family reunion at Jacob and Agnes Nelson's 50th Wedding Anniversary, July 7, 1967  
LEFT TO RIGHT: Inez Tweed, Doris Nelson, Joyce Christenson, Ralph Nelson, Rose Aline Begalke,  
Jim Nelson, Grace Ingulsrud, Mildred Lindquist, Ruby Timms*

Vancouver, and had a ride with Ray and Ruby to Swift Current. I also spent a day in North Dakota with Lars' mother. I concluded my letter with these comments:

After our family vacation at Lake Nojiri in August, we settled down to our regular schedules again. Lars and I have been able to take up language study once more—we have a good teacher who comes once a week. We have another good translator who comes twice a month to help with sermon and Bible study preparations. I have found the teaching of the Old Testament to the Ladies' group at the church a real challenge. There is so much unfamiliar vocabulary. How nice it would be to be able to learn the language as easily as children do. Joel learned enough in two months of kindergarten to get along very well, and now Leon is learning from Joel. Joel is much more content since he learned to speak Japanese and found some Japanese friends.

We lived in Toyota from November, 1966 until May, 1982—except for the two furloughs during that time. While we were on furlough in 1970-71, Norm and Nellie Olson lived in our house and took over the work in the Toyota area for that year. During our 1976-77 furlough, there was no replacement for the work, so our house was rented to a German businessman and his Japanese wife, Rolf and Fumiko Bubeck. They had been our friends for a couple of years and attended our church.

Between the time that we moved to Toyota in 1966 and the time that we moved out in 1982, there were many changes in the work, and also in our family. It would take volumes to tell the whole story of both of these phases of our lives, so the following chapters are an attempt to record at least the main events and changes.

### 35. *Missionary, teacher, builder, father...*

In the first few years of the work at the Labor Center, Lars and Ogata Sensei were very much involved. By June of 1968, I wrote in our form letter that Lars didn't have time to add his bit to the letter because they had been short of help at the Center and he was spending more time there.

The following year, too, he had only three or four days off. Tom Steenberg and Alton Knutson helped at the Center also. Some of the members of Koromo Church were on the staff. Mr. & Mrs. Kuniwa were custodian and head of the kitchen-dining area where many of the young workers came to get a feel of home. Masako-san started work at the Center in May, 1968 and continued until her retirement in 1998. The work of the Labor Center was portrayed in the movie *Who Cares* that our Board of Foreign Missions produced in 1968. Ogata Sensei was instrumental in starting a volunteer organization that grew to involve many of the women from the surrounding areas who came to help with various activities at the Center. Mrs. Toyota, wife of Eiji Toyota, the President of the Toyota Motor company, became the leader of this group of volunteers. Some of these women wanted to study English so Lars started a class for them. When he became too busy to teach that class, I took it over.



*The Labor Center "Ikoi no Ie" Lars with Ogata Sensei—Fall 1967*

By the spring of 1970, problems had developed in connection with the operation of the Center, and the role that the church had played in directing the program was curtailed. Ogata Sensei was replaced by another man as director. It was a very disappointing development, but the church was still able to have some influence through the workers

who remained on staff and in the volunteer organization. Lars continued the classes he had been teaching, and we took part in other activities so that we were still able to be witnesses of the gospel as we came into contact with many young laborers.

There was one advantage to the church not being so involved at the Center in that there was more time for other meetings at church and for outreach. There were ten *chikukai* gatherings every month—meetings held in homes of members in areas surrounding the church. Lars and Ogata Sensei took turns leading these meetings, and the members would invite relatives or friends to come. This was a good way of reaching people who were reluctant to attend services held at church. Later, two of these area meetings developed into “preaching places” where regular Sunday services were held. One of those places was the Motomachi area where we lived. The other place was in Sanage, an area where there was quite a concentration of members. When Ohashi-san became the parish worker for the Toyota area in May 1978, she had an apartment in Sanage. She became the main contact person for the work as it developed. The third floor of a carpenter shop was rented to use as a meeting place, and Sunday School classes, English classes, and *fujinkai* (women’s meetings) were held there as well as the Sunday morning worship services. For the last few years that we lived and worked in Toyota, we were having Sunday services in the three places.

We were always happy to hear about the development of the work in the areas where Lars had put in so many years around Hamana Lagoon. Two church buildings had been built and dedicated—one in Washizu, and one in Mikkabi. We attended the dedication services at both these places and renewed acquaintances with the believers. With the new expressway, it didn’t take very long to drive to Mikkabi and we often had visitors from those congregations. We usually attended the Memorial Service that was held at the mausoleum at Mikkabi once a year, and Lars was sometimes asked to speak. When Shibata-san passed away in November 1968, Lars gave the sermon at her funeral in Hamamatsu.

Besides his responsibilities with the evangelism program in Toyota, Lars was kept busy with other jobs, too. He was on the Nagoya International School Board, and when plans were started for the new building, he was put on the building committee. When the new school was dedicated on September 2, 1968, the building committee work was finished, but he continued on the board. He ended his service with the Boy Scouts as he became too busy with other responsibilities. He became rather disillusioned with the program when one of the leaders from Tokyo did not approve of the troop’s plan for a certain building project that Lars had hoped to start with the boys. The leader’s reason: that particular project would not qualify the boys for any badges—it wasn’t a part of the regular Boy Scout program. Lars thought it would have been a good learning experience for the boys—never mind the badges.

The other job which kept him from having any days off was what he called “Lars’ Repair Service, FDL” (Funds Definitely Limited). Just about every week, he was off to someone’s house to fix a dryer, kitchen range, washing machine or whatever. Most people had learned that Lars could fix most anything that was fixable. After moving to the Nagoya area where there were more “foreigners,” this work increased. Most people had American appliances so Lars was called on often. Those calls sometimes came at very inconvenient times. One Christmas when we lived in Hamamatsu, we were just about to begin our family celebration when Irene Nelson called and said that her oven wasn’t working. She had hesitated to call since it was Christmas day, but she didn’t know what else to do. I hesitated when Lars asked what he should do, but then he said, “If she doesn’t have an oven, they won’t be able to have their Christmas dinner.” He went and fortunately it didn’t take too long to fix it so the interruption didn’t spoil our plans.



It had been Lars' practice to always buy used cars—and whether in the States or in Japan, his price limit was \$200. After he and Kato-san of a Scrap Center in Toyota became friends, he became the go-between—between Kato-san and anyone in the foreign community who was looking for an inexpensive car. He broke his own rule about \$200 cars when he bought a new car early in 1969. The old station wagon that we had was due for inspection which would have cost more than it was worth, and since I had started to drive after having gotten my license in the fall of 1968, he decided we needed something better. He realized that it might not be safe to put me out on the road with the old cars that he could handle. He also rationalized saying that it was my Christmas present for the next five years! The Toyota Corona that we bought was an export model that had been damaged enroute from the factory to the port. Those cars usually had only slight body damage, and a dealer bought and sold them at a discount. We bought ours for \$1400—it retailed at \$2100. Since it was an export model, it had the steering wheel on the left side, but that was never a problem for us. We sold that car when we went on furlough in 1970, and bought another similar one when we returned to Japan the following year.

Lars often found other “treasures” at Kato-san's scrap center. Others called it “junk” but he insisted that each item he brought home had a definite purpose. “It can be used for something!”

He eventually put together a small tractor and helped Hotta-san keep the weeds down in his *kaki* orchard. He also got a couple of old cars that the children used for practise driving on the vacant lot below our house—as a result, they all learned to drive while they were still very young.

In spite of his busy schedule, Lars did not forget his role as husband and father. As he taught the scriptures to many other people, he was aware of his responsibility to teach his own children. He wouldn't allow them to rush off in the morning without having our family devotions. He wasn't always able to be home with the family at supper time, and often he had to eat hurriedly and leave for a meeting, but when he had the time, after the meal was catechism instruction time. With the instruction and devotional time, we often had good theological discussions. He had an English Bible Class at Koromo Church on Sunday mornings for many years, and the older children attended. He felt that it was very important for them to be in the class as it gave him another opportunity to teach them the truths that he was seeking to teach the Japanese who came.

Though he was never the type to display affection in public, he didn't follow the Japanese practice of speaking “down” to his wife. Rather, he didn't hesitate to praise me, or let others know his feelings. An elderly lady in our church made the comment to Lars that she really liked me. His quick response was, “I do, too.” She laughed and remarked that a Japanese husband would never say that to anyone, but she found his candidness very refreshing.

Communication between husband and wife sometimes suffered when the schedules became too hectic. One Monday, Lars had gone to Hamamatsu to fix some appliance at Foege's house. As he had another job to do on his way home, he didn't expect to get home that evening, but he neglected to inform me of those plans. As it got later and later and he didn't arrive home, I got more and more worried. I imagined a traffic accident and hardly slept that night. The next morning, as soon as I thought it was a reasonable time to call Foege's, I called and asked about Lars. He came to the phone, and was so surprised to hear that I had been worried, and then realized that he hadn't told me that he'd be gone overnight. Later, when he stopped at Vorland's, he told Gehard, “I thought she would have seen that my razor was gone!”

We returned to the States on June 18, 1970, flying on a missionary charter flight. We bought Carl Beil's 1957 Chevrolet station wagon and drove to Minnesota visiting many places and friends and relatives in between. Our home for the year was at 2359 Buford

St., St. Paul. Lars had a full schedule of deputation again, and was very busy. Probably because of all the driving he had to do, his back started giving him problems and he spent a couple of weeks in the hospital in December. His first pastoral duty in the new year 1971 was to officiate at Ruth and Mike's wedding on January 2—he gave the bride away, then performed the ceremony.

By the end of the month, he was busy on deputation trips again. He left St. Paul in below zero weather, made stops in Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, and reached Texas in 90 degree heat. He continued deputation travels until we packed to return to Japan. Perhaps the most difficult experience of that furlough was leaving JohnE in St. Paul when we left as he was to enter college in the fall.

Again, we traveled by way of North Dakota and Saskatchewan to visit our families, and ended up in California where we spent three days with Ruth and Mike, and the Beils. We boarded the *President Wilson* on June 26, for our return trip to Japan. We felt fortunate that we were able to travel by ship again as this was the last trip that the *President Wilson* made as a passenger liner, and mid-ocean we met the *President Cleveland* on its last return trip from Japan.

The first couple of days that we were on board, we shared a table in the dining room with a family traveling to Hawaii. They talked about how traumatic it had been for them to leave their daughter in California. We asked them how long they would be away and when they answered, "Two weeks," we decided we wouldn't tell them that we had just left our son in Minnesota for probably five years. We enjoyed every day of the trip as we realized that we wouldn't have this privilege again. As usual, there were a lot of activities for the children. Joel missed out on some of the good times as he wasn't feeling well for two to three days after getting too much sun. Faith enjoyed the trip, but was finding it a bit lonely without JohnE and Ruth. We arrived back in Japan on July 9.

Since we didn't have many responsibilities until September, we did some redecorating in the house, unpacked our barrels, and spent most of August at the lake. Lars went later than the rest of us, and came back for one week-end to take his turn preaching. While at the lake, we made more improvements on the cabin—put paneling on the walls, installed a water tank outside, and set up the "fireplace" heater that we had brought back from Minnesota. Every time any visitors stopped in, we made sure that they saw Ruth and Mike's wedding pictures.

Japan was feeling the effects of the "Nixon Shock"—or "dollar shock" as they faced an oil shortage. We noticed it in the effect it had on the value of the dollar. For years the rate had been ¥360 to a dollar, and in the fall of 1971, it had gone down to ¥300. It eventually went much lower. We noticed quite a rise in prices over the next few years. Because of the oil-shortage scare, we tried to conserve as much as possible, and turned our thermostat down to 65 degrees. Later, Lars found a wood-burning furnace and installed a new heating system in our house.

Since we returned to our former place, Lars was able to get right back into the work with a minimum of delay. The congregation was busy raising money for the new church building. The construction started in the fall of 1971, and during that time, the church and kindergarten moved to an old kindergarten building so the programs continued. The outreach places had now increased to thirteen. Lars had a new opportunity of teaching Bible at the English club of the Toyota Technical College. Some of the young men from that class later came to church and one of them was baptized and became an active member.

Lars was on three building committees that year—the mission committee, Nagoya International School, and the committee for the new church.

The new church was completed and dedicated on July 16, 1972. It was a three-story building with the kindergarten occupying the first two floors, and the church sanctuary

was on the third floor. Everyone was very happy with the new facilities. After the new church was built down-town, the old church was torn down and rebuilt on a lot next to where we lived. Lars spent a lot of time with the rebuilding, doing some of the work himself, and supervising the project. Hotta-san, from whom the mission had bought the land for our house, sold the land for the church at a very reasonable price. A dream that he had for many years became a reality—there was a church in



*New Koromo Lutheran Church and kindergarten.*

Motomachi—more specifically, in Kakimoto Cho. It was completed in time to have the Motomachi Christmas meeting in the rebuilt chapel. We were very thankful for this new facility as forty-three people came to the supper and service that followed. We couldn't have accommodated that many people in a home. In the spring of 1973, we started having regular Sunday services, and children's meetings twice a month. We were now able to reach more people in our immediate neighborhood. Members of Koromo church helped with this new program. In a few years, this became a separate congregation, the Motomachi Christian Church, the second Lutheran church in Toyota.

Before the work on the rebuilt chapel was completed, the roof of it was slightly damaged when a strong typhoon came through on September 16, 1972. That was nothing compared to the damage it did to the roof of our house. The whole roof was taken off, and scattered over the yards of our neighbors to the north. Fortunately, the rain stopped after the roof blew off, so there was hardly any damage to the



*Motomachi Church to right of our house in Kakimoto Cho, Toyota City*

inside of the house—the ceilings were intact. Horii-san, the contractor who had built the house came with a crew and had the new roof on in two days. Through that experience, we learned a lot about how the Japanese people come to the aid of someone who suffers a misfortune. Neighbors and city officials came with gifts and offers to help.

Lars became very busy with another project early in 1973. A Seminary classmate of his was the chaplain at Tachikawa Air Base in Tokyo. He called Lars and told him that since the bases were closing, a lot of furniture and equipment would be given away, or disposed of. Lars and the other members of the Mission Building Committee went to Tokyo and started hauling. By this time, a truck had become an essential vehicle for Lars



*Lars and Ogata Sensei at Koromo Lutheran Church, Toyota City, 1974*

and for the next several months, he and others made countless trips to the bases and received anything that they could haul away. John Bowman, who needed a lot of furniture and equipment for the home for handicapped people that he was building, went with Lars on these trips. John had a member who had a large truck, so every week they would leave at 2 a.m. on Monday morning, and return home with their loads on Tuesday evening. They supplied many churches and kindergartens with furniture, and many missionaries with various appliances and equipment. When Lars had been discharged from the army many years earlier, he had seen the waste when bases were closed. A lot of equipment was simply buried—and no one was able to use it. He was abhorred by this waste and at that time vowed that if he ever had a chance to do something about that problem, he would do it. He saw this hauling business as that chance. It was very tiring work, and since we ended up with a lot of “stuff” in our garage and storage, I got rather tired of the project but Lars always felt it was a necessary job to do. After school was out in the summer, Joel, and sometimes Leon went with him on these trips. Faith even missed two days of school to help when no one else was available to go with him.

As Ogata Sensei was elected District President of the Tokai district in 1974, his new responsibilities frequently took him away from the work in Toyota. That meant that Lars’ schedule continued to be very full. This schedule was now about the same every year, except that he was always meeting new people with new opportunities to witness.

The Board of Foreign Missions had changed the term-furlough plan so that from 1972 and on, we had the choice of taking a three month furlough after three years, or two months after two years. Those of us who returned to Japan in 1971 still had the option of the one year furlough after five years, and we chose that option. By June 1976 we both felt ready for a change again as our schedules had been getting busier all the time.

We left Japan on June 17 and flew to Los Angeles. Our neighbors, Nozomu and Masako Hotta wanted to travel in the United States and Canada, and went with us. We visited relatives in California, and our sponsoring church in Sacramento, then drove across country to the mid-west. We were able to show the Hottas some of the national parks as we made our way eastward, and the long distances that we drove gave them a little idea of the size of our country. The Hottas stayed with Ruth and Mike in Iowa while we went

on to North Dakota for Lars' High School reunion. He preached at the "All Faith Service" in connection with that reunion.



*George, Lars Milo, Franklin, Bertha, Glenn (Ole), Ann, Maida, Arnold and (seated) Gina Ingulsrud.*

The Ingulsrud reunion was held right after that event at Turtle Mountain Lodge. This was the first reunion that Lars' mother was unable to attend. She had entered the Edmore Rest Home after suffering a stroke in May of that year. She had continued to live in her own house until she had the stroke, but her health had been failing. Her poor memory and changes in her personality —she became very suspicious and often thought that someone was breaking into her house—made family members concerned that she was not taking proper care of herself. She remained fiercely independent until the time of her stroke. She spent some time in the hospital and after X-rays, the doctors determined that she had suffered several smaller strokes over the years. Perhaps that explained her loss of memory and changes in her behavior. She had recovered from the stroke enough to get some enjoyment from the visits of her family that summer of 1976.

The Hotta's came by bus to Edmore in time to join in the July 4 celebration—USA's 200th birthday. They traveled with us to Swift Current and to Edmonton, and from there, they drove by themselves to Vancouver, and then back to Japan. We had enjoyed the experience of showing these good neighbors our own country, and having



*Visiting Grandma Ingulsrud in the Edmore Rest Home, December, 1976*

them experience the hospitality of our families and friends.

After our Mission Retreat in July, and spending part of August helping with the harvest in North Dakota, in early September we settled down for the year in the new mission apartments in St. Paul. Even though we had always appreciated the mission houses that we had lived in during previous furloughs, the mission apartments were a big improvement. We thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship with the other missionaries from various countries—whether it was when we ate together at our frequent pot-luck suppers, or sharing experiences while waiting for a washer or dryer in the laundry room. Our children, too, soon made friends with the other MK's.

The biggest event of that fall was the arrival of our first grandson. Richard Lars was born to Ruth and Mike on September 17, 1976 in Sioux City, Iowa. We met him for the first time when he was only one day old when we made the trip to Iowa. Lars had a speaking appointment in that part of Iowa a month later so we were able to visit again. We were happy that they were able to come to St. Paul for Joel's confirmation, and also at Christmas time—we saw them every month the first few months of Ricky's life. We felt fortunate that we were in the USA and could enjoy our first grand-child.



*Mike, Ruthie & Richard Lars with Grandpa, April, 1977*

By December, Lars had already traveled over 10,000 miles on deputation. He wrote in our Christmas letter:

One exciting thing is that I have already been in two churches where the young pastors just out of Seminary are reviving small churches that their predecessors tried to close down. I sincerely hope this is indicative of a new trend in our church. "The church grows only by the multiplication of congregations"—not by piling up buildings or money.

This had been one of his pet themes for many years.

Besides the traveling he did, Lars and I also enjoyed taking some of the Kairos Seminars at the Seminary which was very convenient since the Mission Apartments were

right on the Seminary campus. Being sent as our Mission's representatives to the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Missionary Convention at Urbana, Illinois between Christmas and New Year's was a special treat. Faith went with us, after just graduating from Concordia College.

The rest of our furlough was filled with the usual furlough activities, and with some added problems. After our medical check-up at the Mayo Clinic, it was discovered that Lars had a kidney stone for which he had to have surgery in May—near the end of our furlough. That part of the story, and our travel back to Japan will be taken up again in a later chapter.





## 36. *Homemaker, teacher, missionary...*

As long as the children were small and at home, I tried not to take on very many outside commitments. When we first moved to Toyota, I had a couple of English classes, and started giving the Bible study for the women of the church. Since Joel started *yochien* in April 1967, followed by Leon a year later, (who went for two years), I was a part of the *haha no kai* (mothers' meeting) for three years. That meant I attended all the *ensokus*, *undokais*, special programs and graduations. A frustrating aspect of those events was knowing how to dress. An *ensoku* to me was a "picnic" so I thought casual dress would be appropriate. Not so. Most of the other mothers came all dressed up—it was a "social outing" rather than a "picnic." Since sports was the main emphasis at the *undokai* I usually fit in without a problem. Then when it came time for the graduations, my thought was, "It's only kindergarten—it won't be that formal." Wrong again. I didn't go casual, but neither did I dress up. My lack of class was conspicuous amongst all the fancy kimonos and latest style dresses. And most of the mothers had also just had their hair done. I never did catch up to the other mothers in the fancy lunches they brought to the *ensoku* or *undokai*. Poor Joel and Leon! They were embarrassed by our simple sandwich and snacks lunch.

We no longer had a maid—ever since we came back from furlough in 1965. Ruth and Faith were good helpers and they and JohnE were our "baby-sitters" whenever it was necessary. By then there weren't many women who would work as maids, so in later years, when I did need some help it was difficult to find anyone. From 1969 and on, I did have a lady who came only one day a week to help with the cleaning. We continued to have a lot of guests including quite a few from overseas. Two of my sisters and their families visited us, Ruby and Ray in 1968, and Joyce and Lloyd in 1969, and Lars' sister, Maida visited us in 1981. During the Christmas season, we entertained our classes in our home, which usually meant a total of 120-130 guests. To prepare for those classes, and also for Christmas gatherings at church, I baked over 1200 cookies each season. After several years of doing that much entertaining, I decided that I couldn't handle it anymore and we had the parties at the churches instead.

When I think back on how busy we were during that time, I wonder why we tried to do so much. Because we so often had guests,—and even when we didn't—I was perhaps unduly concerned about the appearance of the house, sacrificing some of the time I should have spent with the children. I always tried to be home when they were home, but I was busy, busy, busy. When we were on furlough in 1970-'71, after we had our regular physical check-ups, I learned that I was hypoglycemic—my blood sugar was constantly low—which explained my chronic tiredness. After getting on a better diet, that condition improved. I continued being busy, but I could manage it all better.

I had not driven a car since I had come to Japan, but after we were settled in Toyota, it became increasingly necessary for me to be able to drive. I went through the difficult hurdles of procuring a Japanese driver's license—the most difficult being the written

test. I took it three times before I passed. Questions like: "*If a car is unable to maintain a speed not over the minimum speed limit, he must use the lane of ascent.*" Two negatives in a "true or false" question—and many more like it left my head spinning. I finally passed, and then passed the driving test on the first try—I boasted about being one of the eleven who passed that day out of over 200 tested. We were all very happy when the Tomei expressway opened in May 1969 which made driving so much easier.

The Tomei also made it much easier for the children commuting to school. The mission bought a fifteen passenger mini-bus to transport the missionary children from Toyota (Ingulsruds), Kariya (Steenbergs), Okazaki (Knutsons), and Toyohashi (Hashes—who traveled by train to a closer station). The fathers took turns driving the bus except for awhile when they were able to hire a driver. That driver was a young man who didn't always obey the speed limits and had the older students in fervent prayer until they safely reached their destination. An unfortunate incident with regard to this bus happened one day when the fathers were all away at a pastors' conference. We mothers were going to fill in for them and drive the bus. Lars had taken the children to school in the morning before he left for the conference so left the bus at our house. It was up to me, then, to pick the children up after school. As soon as Leon came home from *yochien*, I drove to NIS, stopping for a visit at Vorland's first. I wasn't too eager to drive this bus as I wasn't used to it, but I made it to NIS without any incident. Leon was so proud that "today Mommy is driving the bus!" After getting all the children on the bus, we started our trip home. Before we reached the interchange of the expressway, we had to cross over a very narrow bridge—or else take the long way around. Not only was the bridge very narrow, just at the entrance to the bridge were two steel posts set up to make the entrance even more narrow to ensure that no big trucks would try to go on the bridge. Just as we approached the bridge, the front wheel of the bus dropped into a pothole and the front of the bus on that side hit one of the steel poles. It jarred the children, and my first concern was to check to see if they were all right, then I checked the bus. We were able to drive back to a service station where we called Bertha Vorland and Tom Steenberg who came and picked up the children. We left the bus there until one of the men could take it to the repair shop in Toyota. I lost any confidence I had in driving that bus, and didn't try it again. Parents had to take their children to school the following week until the bus was repaired.

In the fall of 1968, we had the whole range of education levels in our family. Leon was in Kindergarten, Joel was in elementary school, Faith was in Junior High, JohnE was in Senior High, and Ruth was in college. For the first time since we were married, we didn't have any children at home during the day. Thankfully, I only had to participate in two PTA's. The PTA at NIS was a very active organization. The meetings were usually well attended which showed the high interest that the parents had in the school, and it was also one of the few occasions when the whole foreign community could get together. I served as PTA Program Chairman in 1971-72, and President in 1972-73, and helped with the Thrift Shop for a couple of years. We sold everything from clothing to cheese and crock-pots to raise money for various projects at the school.

Since Leon had started *yochien* in April 1968, I was free to take on more classes. Besides the Ladies' Bible studies and English classes that I had, I started doing visitation with Mrs. Ogata. The number of classes gradually increased, and I was thankful for the many opportunities that were coming my way. After Leon entered NIS with the other children and was gone all day, I had even more time for classes and visitation. My work gradually increased until by 1979, I had a full schedule, which continued until we left Toyota. After we started having Sunday morning services in three places—Koromo, Sanage and Motomachi—Lars and I were both very busy. We were seldom at the same service on Sunday mornings. The last few years in Toyota, it seemed that my schedule had fallen

into a pattern which was very much the same each year—I wondered if I was in a rut. However, within that schedule, there were always new contacts, new people to meet, new opportunities—and evidences of growth in the former contacts, and in the faithful members who continued to study and grow in their faith and witnessing. The part of our work which gave us the greatest joy was the development of the church at Motomachi. In 1981, this church was recognized by the Tokai District as a third class church, and became an independent congregation. The seventeen people who had decided to become the first members of the Motomachi church were officially transferred from Koromo Church. Since Ogata Sensei had appointed me to be the “overseer” of the Motomachi church, this place was especially close to my heart.

I also thoroughly enjoyed my work with the women. I was privileged to lead the Bible Studies for the women at Koromo, Sanage and Motomachi. As each *fujinkai* met twice a month, and the one at Motomachi every week, that meant eight meetings each month. When I had to start taking my turn with preaching after we started meeting at three places on Sunday mornings, I found it quite difficult. I decided that my gift was in teaching more than in preaching. I gradually gained some confidence in giving the sermons, but I never felt as free as when I was teaching.

Before we left for our furlough in 1976, the Koromo church gave Lars a “letter of call”—requesting that he come back and continue the work in the Toyota area. Since I had become more and more involved in the work also, they made it a double call—not to us as a couple, but a separate call for me to continue in the work that I had been doing. Lars was becoming increasingly convinced that I should have a separate call since I was again doing the work of a missionary as I had done when I was single. We talked to the Mission Director and others on the mission board about it, and it was brought up at a mission board meeting. Their conclusion was that since the JELC was becoming the organization that would request missionaries, the board could only respond to what they requested. Therefore, if the JELC decided that there was a specific position that they needed me to fill, thus giving me the status of a missionary, then they could issue me a call. When it was brought up to the JELC, their response was that if the home board recognized me as a missionary, they would also. So nothing ever came of it. The policy in later years has been that wives can be called to specific positions, but the position is usually in a more specialized field. In our annual report to the mission in 1981, I wrote:

Through my years in Japan, my role has changed from full-time missionary to full-time mother, then part-time missionary and mother, and now since our children have all left home, back to full time missionary.

This became even more true during the years that we were in Sendai. That part of our story is written in a later chapter.



## 37. *Growing Up In Japan*

RUTH 1966 -68, 1969-70

Since Nagoya International School had added a year of high school each year, Ruth's class was able to continue until they graduated in 1968. Even though the school was small, Ruthie had a busy life with many school activities. Besides school activities, she taught some private English classes, and took a flower arrangement class. She wanted to learn as much about Japanese culture as she could. She was now able to go on trips without her family and in October 1966, she and Cathy Vorland had a week-end trip to Nara, staying overnight at the home of one of our former missionaries, Froydis Yoshitomi.

One special event that the NIS students enjoyed that fall was when the Los Angeles Dodgers were in Japan to play Japanese teams. At a game in Nagoya, Ruth and another student had the honor of presenting a bouquet of flowers to the Japanese team—a team made up of Dragons and Giants.

Ruth, with JohnE and Faith took piano lessons from a missionary wife, Mrs. Foege. Even after we moved to Toyota, she and JohnE joined in the activities with their peers. They would usually take the bus and go to Union Church every other week and after the service, go with the young people for their bimonthly gathering.

It was for this group of friends that she and JohnE were planning a New Year's Eve party just a little more than a month after we had settled into our new house in Toyota. Shortly after Christmas 1966, one morning Ruthie complained of the pain in her back—like she had the previous June when her lung collapsed. She stayed in bed and I called Dr. Kawahara. He had said after her first experience with this problem that there was only a 15% chance of it happening again, but if it did, she would likely need surgery. We didn't have a phone in our house yet, so we had to use Hotta's phone. The doctor was not able to come until late afternoon, but we kept calling him to inform him of her condition. At six that evening, Dr. Kawahara came with a nurse and an X-ray technician. They determined that her lung was 60% collapsed so they and Lars took her to the hospital. Ruthie's surgery was scheduled for the afternoon on December 30, so we took the children to Gilbertson's house and Lars and I went to the hospital to be with her. The operation to remove the cyst on the surface of her lung took about two and one-half hours and when it was over, Dr. Kawahara assured us that everything was fine. It took a couple of days before she was able to communicate with us as she had to be sedated because of the pain. The party that she and JohnE had been planning for New Year's Eve had to be cancelled. We were just very thankful that she had come through this ordeal safely. After she was feeling better, she rather enjoyed her two week stay in the hospital as so many people came to see her. She missed about a month of school.

As she wanted to see as much of Japan as possible, she and JohnE took a trip to Hokkaido one year, and during her last year in Japan, they traveled to Kyushu. Besides

seeing new areas of the country, they visited the places where Lutheran work was started in Japan. As an added bonus, they even got to see the Crown Prince and Princess who were also visiting Kyushu. For their senior trip, her class traveled to Takayama.

Since the new school building was not finished until the summer of 1968, they finished their education in the old facilities. The first event to be held at the new school was their graduation ceremony on June 10. It was a festive occasion, not only because of the graduation, but the whole community was happy to finally have their own school building. At the graduation, Ruth and John Larkins represented the other members of their class, Larry Kelly, Cathy Vorland, Karen Luttio, and Cheryl Wallace, and gave the speeches. Following the ceremony, the Ingulsruds, Luttios, and Vorlands were joined by others from our mission family and celebrated at Vorland's house.



*Ruthie's High School Graduation, June 1968*

*John Larkins, Cathy Vorland, Debbie Manierre, Karen Luttio, Cheryl Wallace, Ruth Ingulsrud*

Later in June, the whole family attended the mission's Spiritual Retreat at Amagi San So, after which the young people went off for a three-day camp. The rest of the summer, Ruthie was busy packing and getting ready to leave for college. After some deliberation, she had finally decided to go to Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. Since her Grandma Beil still lived there, she would be able to spend week-ends and holidays with her—and have a home away from home. She sent her trunk with all her belongings before we left for Nojiri that summer. She also made a trip to Hamamatsu for a last visit with her friends there. Koromo church had a farewell for her on the last Sunday in July. As our part in the program, we sang the song, *Surely Goodness and Mercy shall Follow me*. Ruth and Faith sang a duet on one verse, and JohnE sang a solo on another. Before she left for the United States, we had our family picture taken, and after finishing at the photo

studio, we all went to a special restaurant that Ruthie had chosen. Later, she said good-bye to our good neighbors, the Hottas, and we left for Lake Nojiri.

That was her last summer at our lake home. There the mission family had another celebration for all the graduates—from other schools, too—and for those who had been newly confirmed. Then on August 22, we left Nojiri early in the morning and drove to Tokyo. We got to the Haneda airport in plenty of time, so visited with others from the mission family who had come to see Ruthie and Cathy Vorland off to the US. As a final family farewell, we had a favorite Chinese dinner at a restaurant at the airport. It was not easy to say good-bye and see her walk through that gate at 6:30 that evening. Knowing that she was going to be with family when she arrived in the States was a great comfort and we were thankful. She was very brave as she left, and seemed to be looking forward to this new phase of her life. Our oldest child had now left home—and we knew that our home would not be the same. At the same time, we felt confident that she was ready to leave and we could only pray that we had prepared her to face the challenges ahead of her.

Ruth enjoyed her first year of college at Grand View and the times she could spend with Grandma Beil and her friends. For her Christmas vacation, she traveled to North Dakota and spent Christmas and New Year's with Grandma Ingulsrud and the relatives there. During her first year of college, her friend, Karen Luttio was studying at an Art College in Kyoto, Japan. Towards the end of the school year, she wrote to Ruthie and told her that the college wanted another foreign student to attend in the next school year, and they were offering a full scholarship. She decided to apply for it, and as a result, she spent the school year of 1969-70 back in Japan. We were happy to have her come home for week-ends quite often as the bus on the new expressway brought her home in only two hours.

She returned to the US with us when we had our furlough in 1970-71. While we drove from the west coast to Minnesota, Ruth flew back in order to start summer school at the University of Minnesota. She stayed in a dormitory until we settled into our furlough home in St. Paul. While she had been at Grand View College in Des Moines, she had started dating Michael Grubel. The old saying "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" seemed to have been proven true in their case as after their year of being apart, it wasn't long before they announced their engagement. The rest of that year was very busy for Ruth as she continued her studies at the U of M, and made preparations for her wedding on January 2, 1971. They were married at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, the church where Ruthie had been baptized and confirmed. Because of living in Japan, she had spent little time at this church outside of those significant events in her life, but since it was the church where we had our membership, and our church home during our furloughs, it was a fitting choice for the wedding. Besides Grandma Beil and relatives from both the Ingulsrud and Nelson sides of the family, many of our Japan mission family were also able to join in our celebration. After the wedding, Ruth and Mike moved to California where Mike was stationed in the Air Force.

#### JOHNE 1966-70

After NIS moved to the new facilities in Moriyama Ku, JohnE had two more years at this international school. Commuting to school was easier after the mission provided the bus for the students in the four families in our area. The teachers challenged the students well and he found he had to work hard to keep his grades up. He had decided to quit piano lessons but continued playing the violin in the NIS band.

Lars started having him help with English teaching at the Labor Center. This apprenticing lay the foundation for what he later chose as a career.

He had been in Boy Scouts ever since Lars had become Scout Master, and that involved trips and camp-outs. Since he had gone on a similar hike in 1966, he did not go along when Lars took some of the boys on the "50 Miler—afoot and afloat" in June of 1968.

JohnE had been taking instruction for confirmation from Gaylen Gilbertson—with Bruce Vorland, Dan Olson, Chris and Martha Rumme. Bruce Nelson had been studying in Tokyo so these six young people from our mission family were confirmed at our mission's Spiritual Retreat at Amagi San So on June 26, 1968. Dr. Gerhard Frost was the guest speaker at the retreat, giving a series of lectures on the Beatitudes. He preached at the confirmation service, and the mission chairman, Oliver Bergh confirmed the class. After the usual picture taking and dinner, the young people left for a youth camp.



*JohnE's confirmation service at Mission Retreat, Amagi Sanso June 26, 1968  
Danny Olson, Bruce Vorland, Bruce Nelson, Chris Rumme, JohnE, Martha Rumme*

Being in the "Mission Family," our children often had opportunities to hear special speakers who visited Japan. They mentioned that they preferred speakers, often older, who presented themselves as they were. They preferred less the speakers who would try to "reach the youth."

JohnE got to experience some of the bureaucracy in Japan when Lars forgot to apply for his Alien Registration when he turned fourteen. The authorities, however, held JohnE responsible. The police came to interview him, and told him that he would have to write an apology. Even that wasn't sufficient—a couple months later, he had to appear in "Family Court." Lars took him to Okazaki where the court was held and they were required to listen to lectures all morning.

During his last year of school at NIS, he, too wanted to experience as much of Japan as he could and enjoyed the Japan Culture trips that the Japanese classes took. His Physical Education class included Karate and Kendo, more cultural experiences.

Since we were on furlough from the summer of 1970 to 1971, he had his last year of High School at Murray High School in St. Paul. Though a lot of students find it very difficult to change schools so close to graduating, it didn't seem to bother JohnE. He wrote in our Christmas letter 1970 that he liked St. Paul and he enjoyed going to school at Murray. He especially enjoyed Chorus—the year before, he had won the *Excellency in Chorus* award at NIS. He also enjoyed being involved in the Luther League at St. Anthony Park church. He graduated in May, 1971, and had been accepted at Golden Valley Lutheran College to begin studying there in the fall.



We left St. Paul in June, and as we drove away from the house on Buford St. to start our journey west, we left JohnE there to finish tidying up before he moved over to the Olaf and Eleanor Hansen's, his godparents. We were driving in two cars as we were going to leave one at Edmore, so I had to drive one of them. I had a difficult time seeing—not only because of the rain, but also because of the tears. JohnE had looked so alone as we left, and I wished that we didn't have to leave him and go so far away. He felt the loneliness, too, and one of the first things he did after settling in at the Hansen's for the summer, was to call the Asian Recreation Society and enroll as a member so that he could get an inexpensive ticket to Japan the following summer. Hence in 1972, he came back to Japan and spent three months with us. He taught English all summer, and was able to save money for college for the coming year. He had transferred to the University of Minnesota, majoring in Asian studies. After graduating in December 1974, he came back to Japan and taught English at NIS and other classes until June. After a trip back to the States, he returned to Japan in August 1975 as a J2 (two-year English teacher) in our mission. Later in his career, he became a teacher at Kyushu Jogakuin in Kumamoto. It was a special blessing for us to have him in Japan during those years.

FAITH 1967-73, 1975-76

Faith continued to enjoy school—"except for the tests"—and she had great fun in Girl Scouts—especially the camping trips. As part of that program, she took on some of the household tasks which was a big help. She loved to read books and spent most of her free time reading. She kept on with her piano practise, though she quit taking lessons when she was sixteen, after furlough in St. Paul. Basketball, band, chorus, and lots of homework kept her busy. She took confirmation instruction with Sue Knutson and Miriam Luttio, with Alton Knutson teaching them. They were confirmed in June, 1969 at a Mission Fellowship service at Kibo Lutheran Church.



*Faith's confirmation service at Kibo Lutheran Church—June, 1969  
Lars & Grace, Faith; Alton & Toodie Knutson, Sue; Phil & Margaret Luttio, Miriam;  
Grandmother, Mrs. & Mr. Koehler, and Candie.*

As furlough time in 1970 drew near, she had mixed feelings. She was eager to go to the US, but knew that she would miss Japan. She wrote in a letter:

Most people think that I am going “back” to the States. But I really don’t know which way is “back.” Anyway, whichever way I go, I’ll be going home.

While we lived in St. Paul in our furlough year, she was in tenth grade at Murray High School. It seemed to take her a little while to get used to the large school—and the fact that she didn’t know everyone in the school personally bothered her at first, but she soon adjusted and made friends. Playing in the band and being a member of an active church group was a plus, and she realized that she would miss her friends that she had made during this furlough year just as she missed her friends in Japan. She took Drivers’ Ed at school and was able to practise driving enough so that she obtained her license before we left St. Paul in June. She wasn’t able to drive in Japan until she was eighteen. On the day that she turned eighteen in January 1973, Lars went to his favorite Scrap Center and bought a small car for her to use. The next day, Faith went to the Drivers’ Licensing office and applied for her license. She did a lot of driving the last half a year that she was in Japan, mostly driving to and from school.

Both she and JohnE had parts in Ruth and Mike’s wedding in January 1971. JohnE was an usher and Faith was maid of honor. When we returned to Japan that summer, she often got lonesome for her sister and brother, but later she said, “I guess I’m getting used to not having them around.” She soon became involved with school activities—adding Student Council, Yearbook and Drama to her agenda.

Like all her classmates, Faith took on an increasing number of English teaching jobs over the course of her high school years. These ranged from tutoring to helping with the larger Saturday afternoon classes at the church.

In Hosaki Sensei’s Japan Culture class, she studied tea ceremony and flower arranging which she found very satisfying. Perhaps those classes provided the seed from which her later interest in gardens grew.

A common theme in letters written by the children during their last year in Japan before leaving for college was, as Faith wrote:

Since this is my last year here, I’ve been trying to absorb as much as I can of all the things that I like about Japan.

During the school year of 1972-73, Faith worked on college applications as all seniors do. She decided to go to her dad’s alma mater, Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. She graduated from High School on June 15 with a class of fourteen. The week after graduation, Mrs. Toyota invited Faith and her friend, Susan Offner to go with her on a car trip to Shikoku. It was a great opportunity for her to see more of Japan with such an able guide. Her last summer at home was filled with packing and “doing things for the last time.” We went to Lake Nojiri towards the end of July, and Faith spent her last summer at our lake home. Her time there was short as she left Japan early in order to attend Sue Knutson’s wedding in Minnesota. On August 6th we drove to Tokyo and took Faith to the airport. Even though she was ready to leave home, she didn’t appear to be very happy that day as she left, and we all shared that feeling. Again we were experiencing the most difficult part of being missionaries.

JohnE met her in Minneapolis and drove her to visit Ruth and Mike in Indiana shortly after she arrived. JohnE also drove her to Moorhead and helped her get settled at

Concordia College. Ruth, JohnE and Faith were able to get together quite often during her first year away from home.

With Faith's graduation, for the first time in ten years we didn't have anyone in High School. She returned to Japan in the summer of 1975 and studied at the International Christian University in Tokyo for one year. Again we had the special pleasure of having one of our college students come home for week-ends and special holidays. Since that was the same summer that JohnE had returned to Japan, they were both home on special occasions.

#### JOEL 1966-80

Joel entered the Koromo *yochien* in April 1967. He hadn't learned much Japanese during the year we lived in Nagoya, and when he seemed a little slow in picking it up, we decided that maybe he was not a linguist. It wasn't long before we had changed our thinking on that point. He was enthused about going to *yochien* when he first started, but he often tired of it—especially the weeks before the *undokai* (sports meet) or the Christmas program. When I saw the regimentation involved in getting the children to perform to perfection, I understood Joel's lack of enthusiasm.

In some ways, it was very important for him not to be different from the other children—he already stood out as one blonde head amongst all the black. They brought lunch from home—but as the *yochien* provided bread for the children, the mothers were supposed to provide only the *kazu* (food to eat with the bread), and I had little idea of what would be suitable. It took quite awhile before Joel was comfortable with what I put into his lunch box. Gradually I learned, as he would tell me what others had in their lunches. One of the things he asked for was *chikuwa* (fish paste in the shape of a wiener). I cut it into bite-size pieces and put it in his box, but he had to check it first—and I had done it wrong. I had cut the pieces straight across rather than diagonally—the way all his friends had them cut. One day, I put a cookie in his lunch box, and the whole kindergarten knew that Joel had a cookie for lunch. Apparently, that was just not appropriate. In spite of these little incidents, his year at *yochien* was a good experience for him—and for me. We both learned more about the Japanese culture. (Years later, I sometimes met people who remembered me as Joel's mother.)

Joel had only one year in *yochien*. Since the Japanese school year begins in April, he could have gone one more quarter before he started first grade at NIS in September, but because he would have had only three to four months at the *yochien*, we decided to keep him home. (We called him our "kindergarten drop-out"!)

In the time between *yochien* and elementary school, Joel was able to pursue some of his other interests. I was teaching him English kindergarten at home, but other than that, he loved to spend time at the dairy farm near our home. We bought our milk from the dairyman, and pasteurized it ourselves. The dairyman had become a good friend of Lars', and was patient with Joel when he wanted to explore the farm. He also liked to help Hotta-san with his pigs. When some new houses were being built across the street from our house, Joel spent a lot of time talking to the carpenters. On one occasion, the Hotta's took him to the beach for clam digging. His interests always seemed to lean towards rural life. Lars made the comment that it was a shame that a boy like Joel couldn't live on a farm. But once in awhile, he'd show other aspirations. As he was gazing out our bedroom window at Mt. Miyoko at the lake, he suddenly said, "When I grow up, I'm going to be a preacher."

He started first grade at NIS in September, 1968. He was happy to be with several of his best friends. His teacher was Grace Collins, from Saskatchewan, a very fine teacher. On his second day, he complained about a tummy ache and didn't know if he could go

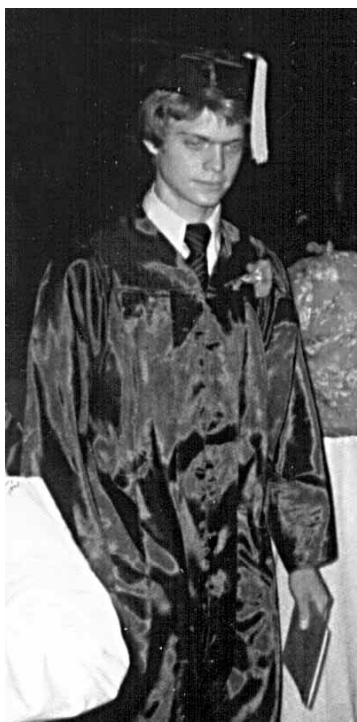
to school. His tummy ache disappeared when he opened a paint set that some Japanese friends had brought for him the evening before. By Thursday, he was already looking forward to Saturday as he had come to the realization that “now I can only play at home on Saturday and Sunday.”

Joel had nearly all his education at NIS—except for the two years that we were on furlough. He had third grade at St. Anthony Park Elementary in 1970 -71, and ninth grade at Murray Junior High in St. Paul, 1976-77. He hadn't remembered his first time in the USA as he had been only two to three years old at the time, so when we came back when he was six, he was very excited. In our Christmas letter that year, his report of our trip from the west coast to St. Paul was very candid and made us wonder about our policy of not editing the children's letters. Some of the comments that we had made during our trip came out in his letter:

When we got to America, Uncle Carl picked us up. We went to Uncle Carl's house and stayed for four days. Then we went on. We stopped at as many people's houses as we could. But when we could not find any people's houses that we knew, we spent about \$40 a day.

He, like the other children enjoyed our times in the States, but was always happy to return to Japan. After a year in US schools, both Joel and Leon found that they had fallen behind their classes at NIS. He missed his big sister and brother when they were no longer at home, and expressed it one evening when he was feeling lonely: “When I sit in the living room and read, there's always no one else there...just Faithie. We used to all be in the living room.”

After Ruth left for college, and was wondering if she'd be able to come home the following summer, Joel wrote and offered to send her his allowance to help pay for her trip.



*Joel's High School Graduation—June, 1980*

While we were on furlough in 1976, Joel completed his confirmation instruction and was confirmed at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church. The service was held on a Sunday in November when Lars had commitments for deputation, so he missed his son's confirmation service.

When Joel got into High School, we started getting notes from his teachers complaining that he was not working up to his potential. He was an avid reader, but had difficulty applying himself to getting assignments done. Perhaps he was distracted by all his other interests—cars, motorcycling, soccer, tree-planting. He was on a soccer team in Toyota, as well as at school. After Faith left, they commuted to school by Tomei bus and school bus, but when Joel got his motorcycle license, he rode to school. He graduated in June 1980 and the day after his graduation, we left for our summer furlough. Our trip through Europe was Joel's graduation gift.

On our trip to Europe, we made stops in Taipei, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Copenhagen, then went by train to Narvik in northern Norway, the farthest north railway station in the world. Joel fell in love with that part of Norway and later dreamed about going back.

Since our furlough was only for three months, we didn't settle down in one place for very long. We relaxed in one of the mission apartments for a few days before we took off to visit Grandma Beil in Des Moines, and Ruth, Mike and Ricky in Lincoln, Nebraska. Later we were able to visit most of our families, and our five sponsoring churches. While in North Dakota in July, most of the Ingulsruds met for a reunion again. During the two and a half weeks that we were in Canada, Joel went on a three-day rafting trip with his Uncle Vern and cousin Tim. We were happy to meet Nakashima Sensei and his wife at the train station in Swift Current. They had flown from Japan to Vancouver. After a couple of days in Saskatchewan, they rode with us back to North Dakota.

Joel had had his motorcycle shipped from Japan to Minnesota, and had ridden it to North Dakota. He and Leon took their motorcycle and automobile license tests while we were in North Dakota since they had been driving with an international license.

Joel had been with us during our furlough travels until it was time for us to head back to Japan. We left him at his Uncle Arnold's in Edmore, ND, and again experienced the pain of leaving one of our children and returning to Japan. It didn't get any easier but rather more difficult as each one left the nest. Faith had come to North Dakota from Santa Fe that summer, and she traveled with us after we said good-bye to Joel. For five more days, we still had two children with us.

Joel had decided not to go to college that year—he wanted to have a year to find where his interests lay, and just have some time off to travel and work. He worked for Arnold on the farm that fall, then went on his motorcycle to Lincoln, Nebraska and spent the winter at Ruth and Mike's. He got a job and took some night classes. The following summer, he traveled all over the States and Canada with Taisei Kato, son of Lars' good friend in Toyota—on their motorcycles. He ended up in Seattle, and that fall enrolled at LBI where he studied for one year. When we came back for a year's leave in 1982-83, he lived with us in the mission apartments and studied at the Minneapolis Community College, later transferring to the University of Minnesota.

#### LEON 1966-81

Of all of our children, Leon lived in Toyota the longest. He doesn't remember any other home. Most missionary children moved about every five years, so our children were blessed in that we were able to stay so long in one place.

Leon's experience in Japanese kindergarten was rather different from Joel's. He entered *yochien* in April 1968, and continued for two years. Though there were a few times when he first started that I would be called and have to go to comfort him because he was homesick, he soon became quite comfortable with his teachers and friends, and enjoyed the experience. He even seemed to enjoy all the rehearsals for the Christmas programs and the *undokai* each year. He readily recited—in Japanese—the Bible verses that he learned. Since there was no kindergarten bus at that time, we either took him in the morning, or sent him by taxi. If we weren't able to pick him up in the afternoon, the teachers would put him on a city bus and he'd come home by himself, as Joel had done. At first we always met the bus, but in his second year, he sometimes came by himself.

Again it was a learning experience for me as I experienced the authority that teachers have over their students in Japan. Leon wanted to invite some of his friends to come and play at our house. I agreed and one afternoon, a couple of his friends came with their mothers. We mothers visited while the children played, and I served tea and cookies. A day or so later, the head teacher asked me about this visit—who had come, how long had they stayed etc. Then when I told her that Leon's best friend wanted Leon to come to his house to play, she said, "No, he should not go." She went on to explain that since this friend's parents had a *sushi* shop, and there were always a lot of customers coming and



Leon leaving for his first day at Koromo Lutheran Kindergarten, and his "kindergarten drop-out" brother Joel—

going, and probably drinking going on, it wasn't a very good environment for children. She was likely right, but it still surprised me that the teachers made those decisions rather than the parents.

After having been at *yochien* for some months, Leon commented, "Mommy, I'm the only one at *yochien* who doesn't have black hair." I was amazed that he hadn't noticed it sooner—with his red hair, he didn't exactly blend in. He was also taller than anyone else in his class and that continued to be true throughout his school life. As he got to know his classmates better, he made another discovery. "Mommy, I'm the only one who doesn't live in a store." A lot of his friends' parents were merchants, and those children probably envied Leon for the big house he lived in.

Leon did some "professional modeling" when he was five years old. He and Andy Vorland were two of the children who appeared in a Toyota Mark II station wagon brochure, which

we saw for the first time in dealer showrooms in the States the following year.

Leon was concerned about whether his Japanese friends would remember him after a year in the US.

"Jesus remembers the goats, so our friends should remember us."

I couldn't understand what he meant, so I asked, "Goats?"

His reply: "Yes, the one who was on the cross."

"That was a robber," I explained.

Then I realized why he was confused—the Japanese word for "robber" is *goto*.

His understanding of Bible stories often gave us a new slant. One evening we were talking about the ascension of Jesus, so Leon asked:

"Where is Jesus now?"...meaning His physical form...

"He's in Heaven," I answered.

"What's He doing there?"

"He's preparing a place for us."

"Oh, yeah, that's right. He was a carpenter."

Leon, like the other children, became very proficient in Japanese. When we returned to the States in 1970, we decided that we'd speak Japanese at home so that Joel and Leon would not forget it. That did not work. As soon as any of the relatives or friends would

comment on how cute to hear them speak Japanese, or when they realized that none of their school friends spoke it, they just completely shut it off, and by the time we returned to Japan in 1971, they had forgotten every word. They couldn't even greet anyone in Japanese. It was frustrating for them for awhile, and they didn't want to go to Japanese Sunday School when they first came back, but the language soon became a part of their lives again.

Leon had first grade at St. Anthony Park Elementary School in St. Paul, and had a good year. His best friend was another MK from Madagascar. He and Joel thought it was great to be the candle lighters at Ruth and Mike's wedding. Because of the wedding coming just a day before Leon's seventh birthday, he got cheated out of a party, but there were a lot of relatives there to help celebrate. He had another new experience that winter—he fell and hit his head which resulted in a slight concussion, and he ended up in the hospital for an afternoon and overnight.

The rest of his elementary school education was at NIS—a busy five years with many experiences. In the summer at the lake, he learned to water-ski, and advanced in swimming. The latter was after a slow start as it took him some time to get over his fear of water. When he first started lessons, he'd come home each day and announce, "I didn't have to get my face in the water today either."

He and Joel also spent many hours sailing, especially after Lars replaced the motor boat with a sailboat. On a ski trip to the mountains near Nojiri in February 1975, Leon broke his leg and was on crutches for about a month. That was the winter that JohnE was back in Japan teaching in the Intensive English program at NIS, so Leon was able to ride with him to school.

Another very unusual experience for all three of our sons the summer of 1975 was when they had the chance to be "extras" in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Carmen* when they performed in Nagoya. There were about twenty from the foreign community who had this opportunity. Joel and Leon played the parts of street urchins and JohnE, the part of a matador.

Leon started Junior High the year we were on furlough and the adjustment to that, plus going into a large school in the US was quite difficult for him. He survived though, and by the end of our furlough was reluctant to leave the new friends he had made.

Leon was the only one of our children to be confirmed in the Japanese church. His service was at our Motomachi Church on Pentecost Sunday 1978, the evening service. Pastor Ogata confirmed him, and we invited the families who had Christian homes to attend. The Vorlands and Evie Tuff who were sponsors at his baptism were also there. We had a reception at the church after the service— an evening of rich blessings. Leon took this step in his life to mean that he had more responsibility now, so he soon started teaching a Sunday School class at Koromo Church.

The rest of the years that he had at NIS became increasingly filled with activity. He played the tuba in the band, sang bass in the chorus, played soccer, and tried to keep up with his school assignments. Outside of school, he and Joel spent a lot of time enjoying motocross. He found the trip through Europe in the summer of 1980 very educational. As he put it: "Ten minutes in a country can teach us more than ten hours of studying from a book."

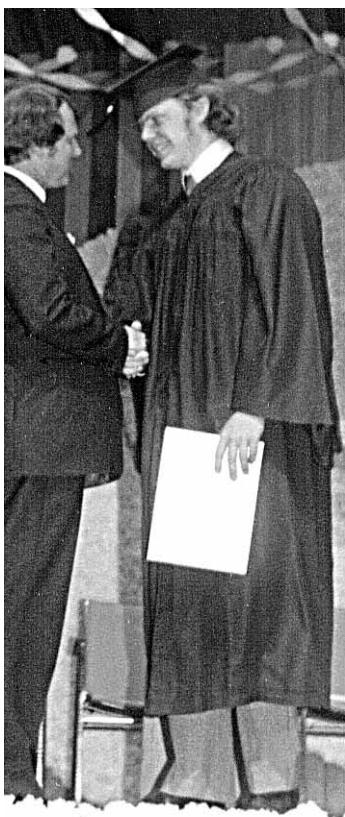
After leaving Joel in North Dakota as we headed back to Japan, he was soon to experience being the only child at home. Faith had ridden with us to Santa Fe where she was working, and after a couple of days of sightseeing there, she took us to the airport in Albuquerque and we flew to Los Angeles. We spent a couple of days with Glenn and Phyllis, during which time Leon went to Disneyland and spent a day by himself. We made one more stop before returning to Japan—Sacramento, visiting with Carl and Norma and some of the people from our sponsoring church. While waiting for our flight

to Japan from San Francisco, Lars and I were looking around at some of the shops in the airport. Leon hadn't wanted to shop with us, so stayed by himself in the waiting room. Apparently, we were gone longer than he had expected and by the time we got back to him, he was quite upset and wondered what had happened to us. We wondered if being without his brother was making him feel insecure. He started school again the day after we arrived back in Japan and was soon busy with his own schedule and friends—and probably enjoyed his new status as an only child.

In 1981, there were a lot of problems at NIS and we started having some doubts about the future of the school. At the same time, Leon was becoming so “entrenched” in Japan, and we began to wonder how he was going to adjust to going to college in the USA. Somehow the idea of having Leon finish his high school at my alma mater, the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute at Outlook, Saskatchewan became a possible solution to the two problems that concerned us. I knew it was a good school, and we thought that this would help Leon make the transition from high school in Japan to college in the States. At first, he was not interested in going—he was quite adamant about it. We convinced him to apply and when he was accepted, he finally agreed to go.

There had been a postal strike in Canada that summer, and his letter of acceptance was one of the last pieces of mail that came through. We looked upon that as a sign that he was meant to go. As the cost of being in this boarding school was less than the tuition at NIS, we had no problem getting approval from our mission board.

When he left for Canada, I went with him to Tokyo and saw him off. The fact that I felt



*Leon's graduation from LCBI,  
Outlook, Saskatchewan, Canada—  
May, 1982*

so strongly that this change was going to benefit Leon made it a little easier to see him leave. Also as we had told him that he could come home for Christmas, it would only be four months until we would see him again. Still, when I got home that evening, the reality set in. I said to Lars, “We no longer have any children at home,” and I broke down and cried. The next couple of days as I went through the upstairs and tidied the empty rooms, the lonely feeling continued. We were alone for the first time in our twenty years of marriage.

It turned out to be a very good year for Leon, and he was thankful for the experience. He did well academically, and made new friends. He was in the choir under an excellent conductor, and also got into drama. He won the best actor award, and was sent to the Ontario Stratford on Avon Shakespearean Festival. Two of his cousins, Jeff Christenson and Brad Timms were in his class and they graduated together. The only disappointing part of that year was that we were not able to attend his graduation. Since it was the custom at LCBI to have the graduation before the end of the year examinations, the graduation was on May 9. We couldn't leave Toyota until the end of the month. However, he did have his grandparents and several aunts and uncles and cousins to help celebrate his graduation. I was able to get to LCBI before he finished his final exams and met his teachers and some of his friends.

It was while Leon was at LCBI that we made the decision to leave Toyota. This was quite unsettling for him and after he read our letter telling of our decision, his favorite teacher helped him to somewhat come to grips



with it. When he came home for Christmas that year, I asked him why this was so difficult for him, and his reply was, "I will no longer have a home." I guess he had reason to feel that way as Toyota was the only home he had known, and from now on, he would have no home to "go back to." When he and Joel came home for Christmas 1981, he packed the belongings that he had left, and said his farewells.

#### REFLECTIONS ON RAISING THIRD CULTURE CITIZENS

*"This is where my roots are!"*

We were standing in the yard of Grand-dad Nelson's birthplace—Laukli—a lovely place in Gausvik on the side of a mountain near Harstad, Norway. It was the summer of 1980, and we were visiting Norway—on our way back to the United States for our three month home-leave. We spent about a week in Harstad and a short time later we were to travel to Austringen, on the Vesteraalen Islands where my mother had been born, then down south to Notodden in Telemark to visit Lars' father's birthplace, and to Drammen, near Oslo, where his mother had lived. On this trip, Joel and Leon were able to visit the birthplaces of all four of their grandparents. We had visited Lars' parents' birthplaces in 1964, but Joel and Leon were too small at that time to appreciate the significance of these places.

For eighteen year old Joel and sixteen year old Leon this summer of 1980 was a time of "discovering their roots." That thought struck Joel as he stood there looking out over the mountains and fjords, and he joyously voiced the conviction that at last he had a sense of his own history. Perhaps he was especially aware of this at a time when he had just left the country of his birth. Since he had just graduated from high school, he knew that he would not be going back to Japan except to visit. When the three of us would return to Japan at the end of the summer, he would remain in the United States. For two boys who had been born in Japan of an American father and a Canadian mother, their conception of where they came from was understandingly confusing. Lars talked often about his home in North Dakota—his roots there were very deep. I felt the same way about my home in Saskatchewan, Canada. For Joel and Leon, the only place for which they had those kind of nostalgic feelings was Japan—more specifically, Toyota City where they had lived since they were four and two years old. They had enjoyed the times we spent on furlough, visiting their uncles' farms in North Dakota and getting to know their cousins, and getting a taste of farm life. Traveling to Canada and seeing the prairies where their Mom grew up, and more uncles and aunts and cousins—all that was exciting—though the many miles traveled sometimes became boring and wearisome. Becoming acquainted with grandparents was a new experience—they finally got to know the Grandmas who had sent those birthday cards with gifts of money, or the checks or packages at Christmas time. But though they had passports to show that they were citizens of the United States, that feeling of really belonging—really feeling that they were Americans—didn't come easily. All five of our children were definitely *Third Culture* persons who had to live in the United States for some time before they felt comfortable as Americans. Neither were they Japanese, though four out of the five had been born in Japan and they had all lived there most of their lives.

Perhaps because they weren't sure of their identity as Americans, none of them made a sudden and definite break with Japan. After one year of college in Iowa, Ruth returned to Japan and studied at an art school in Kyoto for one year. In 1991-92 she taught in a university in Hiroshima under the Fulbright Exchange program, and in 1996 started teaching at Kwansei Gakuin near Osaka. Mike and the boys also adjusted very quickly to living in Japan. We left JohnE in St. Paul to go to college after he had graduated from

High School while we were on furlough. He came back to Japan the following summer and spent three months, then later returned to teach. After his marriage to Kate Allen, and teaching in China for some years, they are both teachers at a Lutheran college in Kumamoto, Kyushu. Faith found the plains of North Dakota and Minnesota quite a contrast to the mountains and trees that she had been accustomed to seeing in Japan, and the place that she had always called home beckoned her back so that after two years at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota she spent a year studying at the International Christian University in Tokyo. In 1983, she married Eric Avildsen and she introduced Eric to Japan when they made a trip there in 1985. Joel and Leon both ended up working in Japan after some years in the United States. Right after Joel was married to Ruth Gilmore in the summer of 1986, he wanted his bride to experience the country where he had grown up. They came to Sendai and lived with us—at first the plan was to be there for six months, but Joel got a job as an interpreter and they stayed for two years. Joel eventually started his own company as a computer consultant and named it *Third Culture Enterprises*. Most of his work was with Japanese companies. Leon not only worked in Japan for several years (he trained and worked in the Performing Arts Center in Tokyo and Toga), but also met his wife there. He and Akiko Aizawa were married in January, 1997.

Our children all agree that being *Third Culture* citizens has enriched their lives. They have learned much from the two cultures that shaped their backgrounds. But they also have had an interest in and an appreciation for the roots that Joel became aware of that day at Laukli.

# Part VI

## *Adjusting to More Changes*



## 38. *Health Problems*

Lars had always been a hard worker. It seems that the more difficult the task, the greater the challenge, and he never tried to avoid a job that needed to be done. He joked that he was basically lazy—the only reason he worked so hard was to get the job done so that he could rest. He was plagued by a back problem for many years, and was forced to rest flat on his back whenever he had an attack of lower back pain. He spent some time in the hospital in Minneapolis in December of 1970 because of this problem. While on furlough in 1976-77, his back was bothering him more and more, and was probably made worse by all the driving that he did while on deputation. It may also have affected his temperament at that time because he expressed so much dissatisfaction with mission policy and decisions—differences that he would have been able to discuss rationally before, but now had become sources of great irritation for him. We had had a busy furlough year, and in the spring started making preparations for our return to Japan.

In February of 1977, we had our regular furlough physical check-ups at Mayo Clinic and X rays on his back showed an abnormality in his left kidney. After further tests, it was determined that he had kidney stones, and part of the kidney had atrophied. On May 13, he had surgery to remove one-fifth of the kidney. This surgery was performed at Unity Hospital in Fridley, Minnesota. He complained that it was the most painful experience that he had ever had, and the surgery seemed to have aggravated his back problem. He came out of the hospital a week later. The pain did not subside as he had expected, but the doctor tried to assure him that it would decrease as he healed from the surgery. That did not happen.

We were scheduled to return to Japan the early part of July, and had made plans to travel to the west coast by car, stopping in North Dakota to visit Lars' family, and in Saskatchewan to attend the Nelson family reunion and the celebration of my folks' 60th wedding anniversary. The mission directors told us to take our time, and to set our return date to Japan only when Lars felt able to travel. He didn't want to lay around and wait to get better, and he believed—at least hoped—that the doctors were right and that the pain would soon subside. We had planned to leave St. Paul as soon as Joel and Leon were finished with school the first part of June. That meant that there was a lot of packing to do, as we had made quite a few purchases during our furlough year. Some of our friends and relatives kindly helped us with the packing—Lars was able to help a little but had to be careful. Just three days before we left St. Paul, he took the boat operators test and passed—he needed this as Japan was requiring licenses for driving motor boats, and at that time, we still had a boat at Lake Nojiri. We also had to sell the car that Lars had used for deputation travel. A friend, June Arnold bought it, so that was easily taken care of.

Everything worked out so that we were ready to leave on schedule, and loaded our station wagon and left the mission apartments on June 10. Lars drove for only a half hour, and then took advantage of the bed we had made for him in the back of the Ford

station wagon. We didn't drive all the way to Edmore that day—we stopped at Elbow Lake and had dinner at Helen Christianson's home—she had helped with our support in Japan for some years. Then we stayed overnight at Roselyn Holte's apartment in Fergus Falls. We finished the trip the next day, with Lars driving a little while, but Joel and I drove most of the way.

We stayed at Frank and Mary's for three nights, and the same at Arnold and Betty's and visited Grandma Ingulsrud in the Edmore Rest Home.

We enjoyed family gatherings and outings and Lars didn't complain much about his back pain until one afternoon after he had gone with his brothers who were doing some fencing. Typically, he couldn't stand and watch them work, so he tried his hand at digging a post hole—and afterwards suffered more discomfort again. On the 17th we left for Canada. We stopped at Dunseith and had coffee at Art and Bertha's, but otherwise drove the long trip to Swift Current that day. Lars was in pain the whole trip—he tried lying down in the back of the car, but even that was painful and it seemed to be more comfortable for him at the steering wheel. He drove for about three hours of the eleven hour trip, but we had to stop every couple of hours so that he could get out and walk around. We stayed at my folks' house in Swift Current, and the first day we were there, he spent most of the day lying on the floor as that was the most comfortable for him. The next day, he preached at St. Olaf Lutheran church, and when he wasn't in the pulpit, he was standing in the pastor's study as it was less painful to stand than to sit down. During the two weeks before the family reunion, he took it as easy as possible—lying down whenever he could. Joel and Leon kept busy helping the folks with painting the garage and fence, and if Lars had been feeling his normal self, he would have been helping, too. He spoke and showed slides at the Lutheran Brethren Church, and also at a Ladies' Aid supper during that time, and also went along to some family gatherings. When we drove any distance, he lay in the back of the car—as he did when we drove to Frontier, a distance of over one hundred miles on the second Sunday that we were in Saskatchewan. He preached at two churches and showed our slides on Japan.

During the Nelson family reunion, we all stayed at a Bible School in Swift Current for four days. Lars spent a lot of the time lying down in our room. I don't think any of us realized how much pain he was enduring at that time—I was very busy with visiting all the family, and Joel and Leon were occupied with cousins. Faith had come from Minneapolis with Ken and Pam. Lars did take part in the special events of that reunion, and was a hit when he recited one of his favorite poems *A Letter Home* (by James W. Foley, the poet laureate of North Dakota in the early 1900's) at the anniversary banquet. (He changed Dakota to Saskatchewan to fit the occasion.)

We left Swift Current on what was called the luckiest day of the century, 7-7-77, which was my folks's 60th wedding anniversary. The family had arranged to have the celebration earlier than the actual date because we were supposed to leave for Japan the first part of July. Even though we could have stayed longer because of Lars' condition, he was eager to get back home where he could relax and hopefully recover. Dr. Doris told us before we left that if the pain in his leg persisted, he had better see a neurologist. Again I drove half of the time on the way to Lethbridge and Lars lay in the back of the car. We stayed at Dorothy Austring's house, and did some sightseeing the next day before we continued on our way to Montana. That day, Lars drove but we stopped often as we were driving through the scenic areas of Waterton Park and Glacier National Park. We spent four days at Maida and Roy's, and had a restful time with them. On the 11th, Lars called the mission office and asked them to order our tickets for Japan for the following Saturday—and then we continued on our way to Kennewick, Washington. After a couple of days with George and Ruth, we drove to Seattle on the 13th—and that day, Lars drove for only one-half hour. We stayed at Dick and Dorothy Waag's, and enjoyed

their hospitality while we repacked our baggage, and tried to sell our car. Dick had a member in his congregation who was an osteopathic surgeon. He made an appointment for Lars to see him to determine if he could give him any help for the pain in his leg. This doctor gave him an acupuncture treatment—but cautioned us that only one treatment would not be enough to relieve the pain. He was right—in fact, the pain was so bad that night that he couldn't sleep, and had to take a pain killer in the middle of the night. And we were scheduled to fly to Japan the next day.

Since we hadn't sold the car yet, Lars called George and asked him if he could take care of it—he said he would have his son, David, pick it up and take it to Kennewick. We had some tense moments at the airport when David didn't show up—and we were just explaining to Uncle Julian (who had come to see us off) how he could get the keys to David. Just as we were going to the departure gate, David arrived. We handed him the keys, and then had a short time to breathe a bit easier as the flight was delayed for one-half hour.

On the plane, Lars took pain killers again so that he could sit more comfortably—he didn't think he could stand for the nine to ten hour flight. We arrived in Tokyo at four the next afternoon, July 17.

We encountered the usual large crowds at Haneda airport, and had to wait in long lines for immigration and customs, which was very difficult for Lars. We stayed in a hotel in down-town Tokyo that night and had a good rest. Joel and Leon had to do all the carrying of luggage from the taxis to the train, and the same when we arrived in Nagoya that afternoon. The Ogatas and Murata Sensei from the church in Toyota met us in the kindergarten bus. What a relief to finally get to our home at four-thirty that afternoon! Several of the church ladies were at our house and had cleaned the house and put food into the refrigerator. The church friends took us out for supper, and several others stopped in to welcome us back. It was truly good to be home!

The next day, Lars and Joel went to the scrap center to get a battery for the car, got the car out of the garage and got it running again. He got our gas system for the house hooked up—then he went to bed to rest his painful back and leg. This is what he had been looking forward to—he had licked this back problem before by just lying low for some days, and was expecting to do the same again. For the next ten days, Joel and Leon and I did our unpacking and settling in, and the only time Lars came downstairs was when people came to see him and even then he would lie on the floor as he visited. He wasn't even able to attend the "welcome back" that the church had for us the first Sunday. He did get up one day to go to the City Office to take care of our alien registration. After one week, I went to Dr. Kawahara to get some more pain pills for him as he was still in so much pain. Lars remembered that our doctor in Hamamatsu, Dr. Kaku had treated him for back pain years earlier, and his treatment was so successful that Lars wanted me to call him and ask his advice. As he wasn't living in that area at the time, he couldn't come and treat Lars, and he advised him to go to a doctor. The next day, Lars felt so much better—the best day he had had for a long time. He was encouraged. But it didn't last long as he hardly slept the following night. Dr. Kawahara had recommended Dr. Shintani at the Red Cross hospital in Nagoya. He wanted him to enter the hospital but there were no beds available. He made arrangements for him to enter Hara Byooiin, which was Dr. Kawahara's hospital. He entered the hospital on July 29.

For the next two weeks, the doctors tried every treatment they knew to relieve the pain and get him back on his feet. They took various X rays, put him in traction, used pain killers, and made a corset (back brace) for him. With the corset the doctor thought he would be able to travel to Lake Nojiri—if he could lie down in a vehicle—and maybe the relaxing at the lake would be beneficial, especially if he recovered enough to go swimming. With that advice, he came out of the hospital on August 13—lying on a bed

in the back of Hotta's truck. He rested that day and on Sunday evening, we packed up our truck with a bed in the back and Keith Vorland came to drive us to the lake. I rode in the back with Lars—and I was very conscious of every bump we hit as it seemed to make him uncomfortable. In spite of the bumps, he took the trip quite well. He had an attack of muscle spasms after walking up to the house—with crutches and others helping him—but after we put him in traction again for awhile he recovered. (We had put a single bed in the living room and hooked up the traction apparatus.) The next day, he had a very good day and enjoyed the sunshine and the Nojiri air as he lay on a bed on the deck. Many friends stopped in to visit, and we were encouraged that this was going to work. But that night, he had another attack of spasms, and we had to use traction again. From then on, we began to realize that we might have to give up and go home again. After the fourth day, Thursday night, he had a lot of the spasms of pain that had been recurring since Tuesday. I felt completely helpless—here we were, eight hours away from the hospital and his doctor. What we had thought was going to be a pleasant two weeks at our favorite vacation place was turning out to be a nightmare. In the middle of the night, when he couldn't sleep because of the pain, and I couldn't sleep for concern for him, I asked him if we shouldn't just ask the Lord to heal him. He didn't hesitate with his reply: "I'm not going to ask the Lord for any special favors. He had to suffer, so we can expect to suffer, too."

The next day, I used Mikuni's phone to call Dr. Shintani, and he said that he would have to come back into the hospital, but since it was the week-end, there'd be no point in us coming before Monday. We were busy the next two days getting ready to close up the cabin as friends continued to stop in and visit. Some friends offered to have Joel and Leon stay with them to enjoy the lake instead of going down into the heat. In spite of the fact that they had been looking forward all summer to coming to Nojiri, they chose to go home with us. They had gone to their rooms feeling quite despondent when Lars had his first attack of pain just after we arrived on Monday, but had managed to enjoy some sailing and swimming and spending time with their friends. We left Nojiri at four on Monday morning—Tom Steenberg came over and helped get Lars down to the truck, and Gehard Vorland drove. Again we had put a mattress in the back for Lars to lie on, and on this trip the bumps were a little less because we traveled on the new Chuo expressway. We got home to Toyota shortly before noon and after having lunch, and doing some laundry, we took him to the Red Cross Hospital in Nagoya. The doctor tried putting him in traction again to see if he would improve, but eventually, that just caused more pain. They did a myelogram on Thursday afternoon, and that evening Dr. Shintani explained the results to me. The X rays showed a protruding disk, so he said surgery was the only recourse. He set the probable date for the following Monday.

Even then it seemed that the doctors weren't anxious to do the surgery, and the date kept being pushed ahead. We found out the possible reason on that Monday afternoon when Dr. Kawahara and Dr. Shintani came to Lars' room to talk with us. When they arrived, Uchikawa-san was visiting Lars. As a high school student, he had started coming to one of Lars' English classes, had become interested in the gospel and had become a Christian. Lars had baptized him. Being a very capable student, he had gone on to university and had become a lawyer, and was practising law in Nagoya. When the doctors came that afternoon, Lars introduced them to Uchikawa-san and added, jokingly, "This is my lawyer."

At that point, Dr. Shintani asked Uchikawa-san to step out in the hall while Dr. Kawahara stayed in the room with us and explained the purpose of their visit. The hospital was wary about performing surgery on an American—in case something should go wrong and they'd be taken to court and sued. They were aware of the fact that this kind of thing happened often in the United States. So before they could proceed with the



surgery, we would have to sign a statement declaring that we would not hold the hospital liable if the surgery was not a success. Now we realized what they must have thought when Lars introduced them to his lawyer! Out in the hallway, Dr. Shintani was making this problem clear to Uchikawa-san. We assured them both that Uchikawa-san was visiting only as a personal friend, and that we had a great deal of confidence in Dr. Shintani.

On Friday, September 2, he had the surgery—laminectomy—and the disk which was very close to rupturing was removed. The next morning, Lars woke up with less pain than he had had in months. It had been less than four months since the kidney surgery in Minneapolis.

As is the custom in Japanese hospitals, a family member stays with the patient in the hospital. There was a small cot in the room on which I slept, and I took care of his personal needs for the next three days. He made a good recovery—his only complaint during his days in the hospital was that he had too many friends coming to visit—missionary friends and Japanese—so the doctor had to restrict the visitation to only family members. Everyone was so kind and wanted to help. Many had been praying for his recovery, and there was much thanksgiving and praise to God when he came home from the hospital on September 14. No one was more thankful than Lars himself, to be rid of the pain that he had had for so long. He had to take it easy for awhile, but the very afternoon that he came home, he fixed the dishwasher that had quit working a few days before. I did the moving and turning it over, but he found what was wrong with it, and promptly fixed it. For other things that needed to be done—like hauling our shipment from the States that had come in to Nagoya harbor, laying the carpets that we had brought back, and moving furniture etc. the boys and I got help from John Bowman, Gehard and Tom, and other missionaries and Japanese friends. How thankful we were for these friends! Japanese friends brought food—usually fruit, and as they never give anything but the best, we had never eaten so much expensive fruit before—or since.

Lars went back to church for the first time on October 2 and had his first English class on the 6th, and his first home-meeting on the 11th and preached at both morning and evening services on the 16th. This was earlier than we had expected that he would be able to resume his work, but he was being careful and he was also faithful in doing the exercises that the doctor had prescribed. By the end of the year, he was back into his normal schedule, and for the next couple of years, that schedule became heavier.

He did have a couple of times in the next few years that his back bothered him, but usually if he just took it easy, he got over it in a day or so. However, in April of 1981, his back and leg started giving him quite a bit of pain and discomfort, so he spent about one week in Dr. Kawahara's hospital. Dr. Shintani examined him, had X rays taken, and used traction again for a short while. At that time, Dr. Shintani thought that a part of the disc left after surgery might have been pressing against a nerve, and suggested that rest and an injection might heal it. But he was very definite in his warning to Lars and told him that his days of doing heavy work were over:

*"Ima wa musuko no jidai desu."* (It is now your sons' generation.)

After a week in the hospital, he rested at home for a couple of days and tried to be careful, but an entry in my diary a couple of weeks later stated: "Lars overdid it yesterday, so he rested most of today."

At the end of the year 1977, I concluded that it had been the most difficult year of my life. Little did I realize that in the years to come, there would be times of greater testing.



## 39. *The Last Five Years in Toyota*

**W**e did have five more years working in Toyota, and it seemed that the work schedule for both of us increased to the point that we wondered if it was getting excessive. Joel and Leon were in High School, which meant that we were also involved in activities at the Nagoya International School. I had responsibilities with the PTA, and Lars with the Board of Directors.

In many ways, the work of the church was progressing—we were having regular services at Motomachi Church, and it was gratifying when in March of 1981, it was recognized as an organized congregation of the JELC. With the added position of a lady evangelist—Ohashi-san—in 1978, we had also started having regular services and classes at Sanage. Ogata Sensei had designated Lars to be in charge of the work at Sanage; he, himself, would be the responsible leader at Koromo; and I was to be the one responsible at Motomachi. On Sunday mornings, we had services in each of the three places with Ogata Sensei, Lars and Ohashi-san and I sharing the preaching responsibilities on a rotating schedule. Ohashi-san and I had alternate months. Pastor Maeda, who had been forced to retire from active ministry because of ill health and lived in the area, was sometimes able to preach at one of the services. He was an excellent preacher and Lars wrote about him, “It is one of the mysteries of the kingdom why such a peerless preacher as Maeda Sensei is unable to preach regularly.”

On the last Sunday of the month, a joint service was held at Koromo—until we realized that the attendance at the joint service was less than the total when held at the three places. There was Sunday School, English classes, and *fujinkai* (Women’s meetings) at each place which made for a full schedule. Besides that, Lars and Ogata Sensei continued to share responsibility for the various area home meetings and Lars continued his association with the Labor Center, mainly through the English classes. Joel and Leon and I helped him with those classes.

In the midst of all these busy schedules, in the spring of 1978, problems started to emerge. There were problems within the congregation, and members started coming to Lars and talking about these problems. Ogata Sensei was a strong and very effective pastor, but after



Grace with Fujinkai members Mrs. Iwatsuki, Mrs. Yoshii, Ohashi-sensei, Mrs. Kuniwa, Mrs. Ogata and Mrs. Tsuge at Koromo Lutheran Church.

having been pastor of the Koromo Church for more than twenty-five years, it seemed that it was difficult for him to share responsibility and authority with leaders in the congregation. Lars listened to their complaints, but at the same time tried to keep the congregation working together with the pastor. A division had also come about in the congregation because of a few who had become involved with a charismatic group. In his annual report to the mission in 1978, Lars indicated that the problems were having an effect on him:

Last year many times I found my spirit willing but the flesh weak. This year sometimes I have found my spirit weak, too. Partly because of my age, I suppose.

All of these problems were seemingly forgotten during the planning for and celebration of the congregation's 30th anniversary in May of 1980. That was definitely a bright spot amongst the difficulties, as everyone worked together and welcomed back the first missionary to work at the Koromo church, Rev. Harold Deal and his family. On May 11, about 150 people gathered to celebrate the occasion.

But the problems did continue and the stress that these problems caused was making us wonder if we should continue working in Toyota. In January of 1980, Lars had asked the church to review our call, and had spoken frankly with Ogata Sensei about our frustrations.

In the spring of 1981, another big problem started to occupy a lot of Lars' time and energy. As a member of the NIS Board of Directors, he became involved in a problem between the administration and several of the teachers. When the teachers learned that there was someone who would listen to their complaints, he was thrust into the midst of the dispute. He was appointed to be one of three board members to investigate the problem, and for about three months, he had to spend a lot of time working with the Board. The whole thing was very stressful for him, especially because it divided the NIS community, and he found himself on the opposite side of some of his close friends. After the summer of 1981, we no longer had anyone at NIS as Joel had graduated in 1980, and Leon had left for LCBI in Outlook, Saskatchewan. Lars continued to serve on the Board until May of 1982 but with less problems or stress.

Lars had often said that he didn't think a pastor reached his peak until he was fifty to sixty years old. At that age, years of experience in many different situations would add depth and wisdom to the theological education that had been acquired at the seminary, and through the continuing education received through study for sermon preparation and other opportunities. It seems that he himself was denied the opportunity to prove that theory as symptoms of a declining ability to carry out his pastoral work gradually began to be apparent.

It is only as we look back upon those years that we can see more clearly that there was such a decline, and at that time, we hadn't even heard of Alzheimer's Disease. We now know that the onset of this disease is very subtle, and not knowing what the cause of various cognitive changes could have been, we rather easily dismissed the problems by attributing them to fatigue and stress caused by overwork, and the many problems that he had dealt with during those years. Also he had undergone those two major surgeries within a few months in 1977, and perhaps that had had more of an impact on him than we had realized.

As I look back, I remember that from 1980 and on, he was beginning to experience more difficulties in preaching. He had always had a hard time with the Japanese language, but he had become more comfortable preaching to people who knew him. There were times when he would fall back on an interpreter. When Inukai-san was a

member of Koromo Church, and such an able interpreter, it was often a temptation to ask him to help. Invariably when he did choose to speak through an interpreter, the church members would complain and tell him that they preferred that he spoke in his own Japanese—even though it was flawed. On one occasion, he was asked to give the Christmas message at the kindergarten Christmas program which was to be held in a public auditorium. Since this would mean speaking to hundreds of parents and friends who were not accustomed to his Japanese, I convinced him to have his message translated and written out. After that program, several people came to him and complained. They said it just didn't sound like him.

As time went on, however, he was having more and more difficulty finding the words that he wanted to use. He also had difficulty preparing his sermons, and carrying a thought through from beginning to end. During that time, I often thought to myself, "If he could only preach in English." I remembered the good sermons he had preached in the past, and it was painful to see him struggle as he preached now. There were also times—as far back as 1979—when he forgot appointments. He had written the appointments in his *techo* (date book), but had forgotten to look at his book. One of those times was when Ohashi-san, our parish worker, had called from Sanage when they were having their Sunday School Christmas program and asked where he was because he was supposed to be showing a video at the Sunday School. We laughed it off, kidding him that he must be getting old and forgetful. In retrospect, I don't know if this was an indication of the beginning of his memory problems or something that happens to a lot of people—especially after a very busy day.

Since Joel graduated from High School in June, 1980, we had decided that this would be a good time to travel back to the States by way of Europe. Joel had been two years old and Leon had been only six months old when we had gone to Europe in 1964. The trip that year had been for the benefit of Ruth, JohnE and Faith, as they were of an age when they could learn a lot about these other countries. Now we thought it was Joel's and Leon's turn to also have that opportunity. Unlike the trip in 1964, Lars did not seem very enthusiastic about doing all that traveling that summer. In 1964, he had done most of the planning, but it seemed that in 1980, I had to push to get decisions made. I thought it was because he was tired. However, I now wonder if it was indicative of one of the early symptoms associated with Alzheimer's Disease:

*A preference for familiar things.*

He did seem to enjoy the trip, but lacked the exuberance that he had shown on other trips.

Another change that I was noticing—perhaps more in retrospect than at the time—was that his sense of judgment was not what it had been. Another symptom listed amongst the cognitive changes noticed in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease is:

*Judgment may be impaired early.*

I had always depended a great deal on him for making decisions as he did have good judgment—he would always consider all sides of a question and then mull it over in his mind, and usually come up with a good answer. There were times when I didn't agree with him, but as the years went by, I learned that he was usually right—not 100% of the time, but enough so that I had learned to depend on him for making a lot of the decisions.

He probably would have handled the problems at Koromo Church better—and maybe even avoided some of the problems if he had been completely himself. He made some remarks to church members that he should not have made—and would not have made

a few years earlier. He was working with so many others on the NIS problem, it may not have made a difference if it hadn't happened during this period—but he probably would have handled it with less stress on himself.

On August 6, 1981, while vacationing at Lake Nojiri, Lars received the phone call telling of his mother's death. After being in the Edmore Rest Home for four and a half years, her health had failed even more, and she had been transferred to the Lake Region Lutheran Home in Devils Lake where she died. Lars received the phone call during the first week of his vacation. His sister Maida was visiting at the time, and she cut her visit short to go back for the funeral. Lars had also planned to go, but when it happened just at the beginning of his vacation, he decided that the trip would be too exhausting and he would not be ready to go back to work at the end of August. His schedule of work had become increasingly heavy and because of all the stress that he had been under, he felt the need of a good rest.

In October, 1981, Alton and Toodie Knutson visited us, and they were very surprised when Lars got confused as to which road to take to go to a certain place. They had known him to be very good at finding his way around—especially in Toyota where we had lived for so long.

By the fall of 1981, Lars wondered if he was suffering from "burn-out." The schedule had been heavy—after fifteen years in one assignment, that's not surprising; the problems had been many, and his health had not been the best. When Doug Swendseid, our area secretary, visited us in November of 1981, we told him of our discouragement. Lars was not the only one who felt it—I was also frustrated with our situation, but I was hoping that we could stay and perhaps have some changes to make the work less stressful. I did not want to leave Toyota. But Lars also told Doug about the difficulties he was experiencing in preparing and delivering sermons. Doug brought up various possibilities for us—perhaps an assignment in Hokkaido as they were looking for someone to go there; or a year's study leave in the US, and then assignment to a smaller place. We favored the latter suggestion.

That was on the ninth of November, and Doug was to consult with the home office, but it seemed that we felt it was already decided because we called JohnE in Kyushu on the twelfth and told him that we would be taking a study leave. The next day, Alton called and talked about the possibility of their coming to Toyota if we were to leave. Just a few days later, Lars called Ogata Sensei and the District President, Yamamoto Sensei and told them that we would be leaving. Then we wrote to the rest of our family and told them of our plans.

The next few months were not free from stress either as the congregation urged us to reconsider and come back after our study leave. It was very uncomfortable to be in the middle of a problem between the pastor and the congregation—but it made us realize that the decision to leave was the right one. We could not take sides, so it was better for us to leave. Knowing that Christmas of 1981 was to be our last Christmas in Toyota was not a happy thought, but in one way, we were already conscious of the heavy load of work and responsibility starting to be lifted from our shoulders. Since it was to be our last Christmas there, we had Joel and Leon come back from Seattle and Outlook to spend their last Christmas in the home they had known since they were four and two years of age. JohnE came home from Kyushu, so it was a happy celebration.

Lars had asked JohnE to bring the Christmas message at the Sanage Christmas meeting and also at the Motomachi meeting. He may have asked him to do this to be relieved of the responsibility himself, or it may have been just to take advantage of a son who was available and capable to fill in for him.

At about this time, Lars was showing some signs of forgetfulness—but again, it didn't seem to be anything more than what a lot of people experience at times. Maybe it was the

busyness before Christmas that made him forget to take the text books for the English classes at the Labor Center so that Joel had to go home for them. Or when he went in to Nagoya to pick up the chain saws, he did some Christmas shopping with me, and then came home without the chain saws, and had to go back to get them later. During that same week, Joel was to take one of my English classes one morning, and we got into a discussion after devotions and we both completely forgot about the class. So was this forgetfulness a symptom of a disease, or a family trait? Later on, Lars had to push the car to get it started after having left the park lights on.

During this period, another episode had been developing. In November of 1981, Lars and others of the Nojiri Lake Association community had gone to Lake Nojiri to cut trees as they did every fall. This was part of his responsibility as a member of the Property Committee of the NLA. Sato-san, as one of the caretakers at Nojiri was helping with his chain saw also. Due to some misunderstanding, a tree on Mikuni's property was cut down by mistake. It was a tree that we and our neighbors, the Rummes, had hoped Mrs. Mikuni would have removed to improve our view, but she was quite adamant that she did not want that tree cut down. One morning, when a crew was cutting trees along a path, Lars came along just as Sato-san had felled this particular tree. He realized the potential problem, but didn't think it would be serious. When he got home and told me about it, I felt that he had to call Mrs. Mikuni and tell her, which he did. As the person in charge, he took responsibility for the mistake, and offered to plant another tree for her the next summer. She called back later for more details, and in January Lars received a letter from her lawyer asking for ¥300,000 to pay for the tree. Lars called her again and tried to explain that it had been an unfortunate mistake, and could she not forgive him? Her only reply was that he should deal with her lawyer. So Lars consulted with his lawyer, Uchikawa-san, and in February, the two of them went to Tokyo and met with Mikuni's lawyer. Uchikawa-san was certain that if they took it to court, they would win, but neither one of them felt that that would be wise. We would still be neighbors at the lake, and we wanted to keep the good relationship that we had enjoyed for so many years. They did get the amount down to ¥250,000, and agreed to pay it. Paying the money was not as difficult as coping with the hurt of not being forgiven by a neighbor with whom we had been friends and shared so many happy occasions. (Later, the NLA Executive committee decided to reimburse Lars as he had been doing the work as a representative of the NLA.)

These months were very busy as we prepared to leave Toyota. There was still controversy between some members of the church and the pastor, and it was during this time that Lars tried to be mediator, and was not very successful. In fact, it may have been better if he had not tried. For one thing, confrontation is not the Japanese way of solving problems, and secondly, he may already have been showing signs of impaired judgment. He was honestly trying to answer some of the questions that the people brought to him. For example, one older member of the Koromo congregation could not understand why we were leaving, and asked that question very directly at the church's annual meeting. Lars went to him a couple days later, and tried to explain the reason, then went to talk to the pastor about it. In these conversations, Lars expressed the opinion that he thought it was time for the pastor to take another call. He never doubted Pastor Ogata's pastoral abilities—rather he thought he was an excellent pastor and evangelist, but after twenty-six years in the same church, he thought it was time for a change. The District President was drawn into the controversy, and the end result was that nothing changed. Things settled down and the congregation went about planning for our *sobetsukai* (farewell meeting), and the coming of the Knutsons to replace us. The last two to three months were very busy with packing and attending all the *sobetsukais* that the various classes and groups had for us. Our garage sale (which we called a moving sale) was perhaps the first of its

kind in that area. The church's *sobetsukai* on May 23 was a wonderful occasion. The morning worship service, at which I gave my farewell message, was followed by a pot-luck dinner and program. We were overwhelmed by the generous gifts they gave us, and by the outpouring of Christian love. Leaving the home we had enjoyed for sixteen years, all the familiar places in Toyota, and the many, many friends—who had grown to be more like family, especially our neighbors the Hotta family—was not easy. Being so busy the last weeks while we prepared to leave helped to ease the pain of parting. We didn't have much time to dwell on it. I left for the USA on May 28, and Lars left one month later. He gave his farewell message on his last Sunday in Toyota.





*Lars and Grace with Grandpa and Grandma Hotta—the day Grace left Toyota, May 1982*



*The younger Hottas—Masako, Hideki, Miho and Nozomu*



## *40. Rest, Study and New Assignment*

**T**he reason that we left at different times was that I had planned to enroll in the summer session at the Seminary in St. Paul and study Greek, so that I could go on to further studies in the fall when we started our study leave. Since there was no apartment available for me at the Mission Apartments, I gave up on that plan, but still decided to leave early so that I could spend time with Joel in Seattle and with my folks in Swift Current. Lars had decided after our last home leave that flying across the Pacific was too stressful—he blamed the jet lag that he suffered for his disorientation after a trip. He had determined that he would not fly again, and went about trying to find a way to go by ship. That way, we could also take back a lot of baggage with less cost. Since we were moving from Toyota, we had more than the usual home leave baggage. We had become acquainted with a Norwegian shipping company executive, Kjell Thronaes and his wife, Britt—in fact, we had become good friends. Lars talked to him about his desire to travel to the States by ship, and Mr. Thronaes was able to make those arrangements on a Norwegian freighter. Lars bought a used van from Kato-san's scrap center, and was packing our baggage into the van. His plan was to have the van go on the ship with him, and then he would drive the van from the west coast to Minneapolis. On the morning that I was leaving to fly to Seattle, Mr. Thronaes called and said that the ship would not be going until September. He was very sorry to disappoint Lars, but there was nothing he could do about it. Therefore, after I left, Lars had to repack our shipment and make arrangements to have it shipped. He also entertained visitors from a sponsoring church in Colorado—he made arrangements to have them stay in the home of one of our church members. People from the churches were very good to bring food to him during that time—much more than he needed. He called Mission Transport Service and arranged for a ticket to fly to Seattle the end of June.

When he arrived in Seattle, he spent some time with Joel and bought a car, a Toyota Corolla, then drove to Swift Current, stopping to visit Maida in Montana. He arrived during Dad & Mom's 65th anniversary party on July 7.

Dad and Mom had kept active in their community and church until Dad's health started to fail. He had a pacemaker put in to regulate his heart beat, and had prostate cancer. In spite of these health problems, he was enthusiastic about celebrating their 65th anniversary. He even gave a little speech, a good one, to thank everyone for coming to the party—which was held at Mildred and Phil's house.

The day after the party, we left for North Dakota. Leon had been in Swift Current since finishing school at Outlook so he went with us. He had wanted to stay with his cousin Kevin and then go out to the coast and come back with Joel, but Lars insisted that he come with us. I was a bit surprised that he didn't really listen to Leon's wishes with regard to the summer plans. As it turned out, Leon did have more time to spend with his cousins in North Dakota, but at the time, he was quite distressed that his wishes had not been considered. When we were crossing the border from Canada to the USA, going

through the custom's gate, Lars fumbled trying to open the car window—it seemed he had trouble finding the knob to open it. Leon got rather impatient, and after we had been waved through, he said, "The only reason they let you through was because they thought you were senile!"

We laughed at his remark, but a few years later when that kind of confusion became all too common, it seemed that this incident had been an indication of what was to come.

We spent the rest of the summer in "our house" in Edmore which worked out very well. (Lars' mother's house had been willed to us.) Lars and Leon were able to help on the farms whenever they needed extra help. Our shipment came from Japan and we stored some of our things at the house there, and sorted out what we would need in our apartment in St. Paul. During that time, we attended the Mission Retreat at St. Olaf College, and also the Nelson family reunion at Lake Metigoshe. Joel had joined us at the reunion, having driven from the west coast with Kevin.

While in Edmore, Lars preached at his home church. His preaching that summer was not like the mission sermons that he had given on other furloughs. As when he preached in Japanese, he was still having trouble carrying a thought through in a sermon. His lack of fluency he blamed onto the adjustment to preaching in English again after having preached in Japanese for so long. He had usually used an English outline even when he preached in Japanese, so now when he looked at his outline, he had to switch from thinking in Japanese to thinking in English. He said it always took him two to three months to make this switch. However, that year of home leave deputation continued to be frustrating for him as it seemed he did not adjust. He was using more and more stories in his talks—which would have been fine, but the stories didn't always add to the message he was trying to bring.

We had been asked to show slides on Japan at the Lutheran Church Women's meeting at the church in Edmore. Lars gave a brief devotional talk before the slides. I noted in my diary after that meeting: "Lars started without being introduced, so they had to change the order a bit."

We settled into Apartment E in the Mission Apartments towards the end of August. We had left Edmore when we heard of Grandma Beil's death on the 16th, and unloaded our things in the apartment and went on to Des Moines to attend her funeral on the 20th. Joel and Leon traveled with us, as did Akiyo Tsuge from Toyota who was visiting the USA that summer.

Grandma Beil had resided at Heather Manor, an apartment complex in Des Moines, ever since she had moved out of her own house a few years earlier. She had been diagnosed with cancer some months before her death. Faith was the only one of her three Ingulsrud grand-children who was able to be at the funeral. JohnE was in Japan, and Mark and Carol Beil were visiting him and seeing Japan just at the time of Grandma's death. Ruthie's baby was due anytime, so she and Mike could not make the trip from Lincoln, Nebraska. Carl and Norma Beil came from California, as did Roger Williams. His piano playing at the funeral service was very special as he played in honor of his Aunt Augusta.

We went on from Des Moines to visit Ruth and Mike in Lincoln. We had hoped to welcome our second grandson, Stephen John into this world while we were there, but he waited to make his appearance until the evening after we had left on August 24. Faith and Leon had stayed a couple days longer than we, so they were able to be there for the big event.

After getting somewhat settled, and registering for classes at the Seminary, Lars went back to Edmore to help Arnold and Frank with the harvest, something he had always looked forward to doing. Leon got ready and left for LBI in Seattle, and Joel was staying with us in the Mission Apartments, getting ready to start classes at the Community

College, and looking for a job. Lars was delayed in getting back from Edmore because he had gotten a bad eye infection, and had difficulty seeing when he drove.

He started a class at the Seminary, but decided that he would only audit it, as he didn't feel up to doing all the class work required. Later, he found that the Kairos Seminars on various topics that lasted one week were easier for him to handle. I started studying Greek, and took one other class.

In the middle of September, we went to Lincoln and Lars had the privilege of baptizing Stephen John. Again we felt fortunate to get in on the early days of our second grandson's life. The Grubels visited us, or we were able to visit them in Lincoln two or three times during the year.

Lars had agreed to teach English to East-Asian refugees in an *English as a Second Language* program in St. Paul. This involved a class on Wednesday evenings. He was enthusiastic about the class and enjoyed teaching and getting to know some of the students.

In October that year, another incident happened that was somewhat out of the ordinary for one who had always been an excellent driver. He ran into a car driven by the wife of one of the Seminary students. It was not a very bad accident but it was his fault. It cost five hundred dollars for the repair on our car, which was the amount of the deductible. Getting used to driving on the right side of the road might have been the reason that he made such an error.

We didn't do any speaking in churches except for the churches that sponsored us. We were at Zumbro Lutheran in Rochester in October, in Longmont, Colorado in November, and in Hudson, Wisconsin in December. At each of these churches, Lars preached at the morning services, and I gave a short greeting from Koromo Church as I presented the banners that they had sent for us to give to these congregations. They were all enjoyable events with potluck dinners and a time for Lars to show our slides from Japan. The longest trip we made was to Colorado, and on the way back we spent two to three days at Ruth and Mike's in Lincoln, Nebraska. Spending that time with our grandsons, Ricky and Stephen, was a special treat—and very relaxing after a long trip. We went from Lincoln to Edmore, and spent Thanksgiving with the family there before returning to St. Paul and back to our studies.

Being able to spend Christmas with the whole family was a wonderful part of this year in the United States. Joel was already at home, Leon came home from Seattle LBI, Faith and Eric came from Massachusetts, and Ruth and Mike and boys came from Lincoln. Doris also joined us for the celebration. It became even more of a celebration when Faith and Eric announced their wedding plans—the announcement came wrapped in a gift under the tree. Three days after Christmas, JohnE came from Japan for one week, so our Christmas celebration was extended. He finished his assignment in Japan the first of April, and returned to St. Paul and lived in one of the efficiency apartments.

In March of that year, we had our physical examinations. During his talk with his doctor who had asked Lars if he had any special problems, Lars mentioned his failing memory. The doctor recommended that he be seen by a neurologist and a psychiatrist. On March 7, he had his first appointment with the psychiatrist, and three days later, with the neurologist. They did a brain scan and an EEG (*electroencephalograph*). We both worked on filling out a questionnaire for the psychiatrist, and when he went back to see both doctors on the 21st, they reported that the results of the tests thus far showed nothing wrong. A week later, he met with the psychiatrist again, and the report was that there was no real clear diagnosis but it was possible that his memory loss was due to a pattern of suppressing problems and unpleasanties, and that had probably affected his memory of other things. Lars was not very impressed with this particular psychiatrist. For one thing, in answer to a question about whether or not he ever lied, Lars honestly

answered in the affirmative—that there were times when he was not 100% truthful—and the psychiatrist expressed shock at this answer coming from a Christian—and a pastor! We did not take his diagnosis very seriously.

During this time, we were also in discussion with Doug Swendseid about our next assignment in Japan. He informed us that the JELC was considering us for Sendai—to work in Tsurugaya—the work that the Knutsons had left when they moved to Toyota. We were not happy about this suggestion, so Lars wrote to Pastor Utsumi, the president of the JELC:

Our area secretary, Doug Swendseid, informed us in November that you might be considering us for work in Sendai. This surprised us. We have said that we would be willing to go wherever we are needed, but according to *The Japan Harvest* magazine, Sendai has the highest concentration of missionary personnel in Japan. So we wonder why this place has priority over other places which have less workers. We trust that you will give us a more challenging place to work.

In the ensuing months, there was more correspondence with Pastor Utsumi, and we made it quite clear that we were not exactly pleased with this assignment. We had heard from the Knutsons about all the problems and difficulties in the work there, and we didn't feel up to that particular challenge at this time. However, Lars had always believed that the Holy Spirit works through the church, and we were willing to abide by their decision. By the first part of April, it was decided that we were to go to Sendai, and we began making preparations for that transition. We continued to keep busy with classes and shopping and packing, and now also with preparations for Faith and Eric's wedding.

We drove to Massachusetts in May for the wedding on the 15th. JohnE had gone on ahead to help with preparations. Leon had flown home from Seattle, and with Joel, the four of us drove non-stop—except for meals. Since Ruth and Mike, Ricky and Steve were also there, we had another reunion. The wedding was at a ski lodge and family members and friends all stayed there from Friday evening until after the wedding celebration on Sunday. Lars officiated at the ceremony, and gave a short message. Others seemed to think that he did fine, but I felt that there was something lacking. He even forgot a prayer at the end of the ceremony. I didn't say anything to him about it as I knew it would make him feel like he had failed. It had been a very pleasant week-end as Faith and Eric's families and friends shared in this significant event in their lives.

We finished classes at the Seminary on May 20, and spent the next week packing. On the last week-end in May, we went to the last of our sponsoring churches—Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha. JohnE went with us and on the way, we spent one night at Ruth and Mike's house in Lincoln. Lars preached at the two morning services in Omaha—and I sensed more than ever that his preaching was not what it should have been. Ruth and Mike and JohnE who came for the second service also noticed that he was having difficulties. Ruth had always said that her dad was her favorite preacher, but his sermon that Sunday disappointed her. We were now at the end of our year of home leave, and Lars had hoped that with the change and the rest and the study, he would have recovered somewhat from the "burn out" that he thought was the cause of his problems. He himself actually thought that he was better, but there were doubts that continued to linger in my mind.

We helped Joel and Leon get somewhat settled into an apartment in Minneapolis, then left for the west coast on the first of June, driving the Corolla. We left the Tercel that we

had bought in North Dakota the previous summer with Joel and Leon. This time we spent only a couple of days at Edmore and Swift Current.

Dad had not been well, and we sensed that he might not have much longer to live—he was very quiet and seemed to have that feeling himself when he said good-bye to us. This was the last time that we were in my family home in Swift Current.

We stopped at Maida's in Montana on our way to Issaquah. We had planned to stay at LBI but missed the road that led there, so we stayed in a motel near-by. Again we had a car to sell, and only a day to do it, which caused us some concern. In the morning, we read Proverbs 3:5-6 for our devotions, "*Trust in the Lord...and He will direct your paths...*" and we felt confident that the Lord would guide us that day, too.

On our way to visit George, we stopped in at LBI. In our conversation with LBI President Jack Eichhorst, we mentioned that we had to sell our car before we would leave for Japan the next day. He asked to see the car, and within an hour, he had decided to buy it. We delivered it the next morning and the LBI van took us to the airport. The Lord does provide!

We flew to Tokyo on the ninth of July, arriving on the tenth—the first time that we were returning to Japan without any of our children. We changed planes and flew to Nagoya—another first, as we had always gone by train on other trips. Alton and Takeuchi-san met us and took us to Yoshii-san's house as she had invited us for dinner that evening. It felt good to be back with our Japanese friends. It was also exciting to return to our old home at Kakimoto Cho where Alton and Toodie had been living for the past year.

The next day, we visited our former neighbors, the Hottas. The *ojiisan* (grand-father) had been bedridden for some months, and was very weak. He woke up enough to know that we were there and seemed glad to see us. As we left, Lars said, "We'll meet again in Heaven."

He replied, "Yes, I'm so happy that we'll meet in Heaven."

The next morning, Ogata Sensei called and told us that Hotta-san had died in his sleep early that morning. Everyone felt that he had waited for Lars to return. The next few days were very busy—the wake and funeral (at Motomachi Church), a "welcome back" potluck dinner at the church, friends stopping in with flowers and food, invitations out for meals, attending some classes and meetings with Knutsons to meet former students and friends, buying a car, and getting ready to leave for Sendai. We left Toyota the morning of July 17, and drove to Tokyo in our newly purchased four-year-old Carina. We took care of business at the bank, insurance office, and church office and stayed overnight at the Lutheran Center. We were now about to leave the Tokai District of the church where we had lived and worked since our arrival in Japan thirty years earlier. We were beginning to feel a bit lonely—no children with us, and now we would also be separated from the mission family.





## *41. A New Start in Sendai*

**A**s we drove north the next morning, the first time on the Tohoku Expressway, we stopped at most of the service areas to acquaint ourselves with this new highway. We reached Sendai before noon, and since the Knutsons had given us good directions, we found Taylor's house without any trouble. Because the Lutheran mission house had been rented out and would not be available until later on in the fall, we were to live in a mission house owned by the Assembly of God mission. It was furnished, so we did not have to have our belongings shipped from Toyota until we would move to our own mission house.

It was a gray, cloudy day when we arrived which did nothing to lift our spirits. The house was comfortable, and we had everything we needed. Bob Boatwright, a Southern Baptist missionary came over and helped Lars get the kitchen stove, water-heater, and space heater going. That was somewhat of a shock to us, too—we had never used a heater in June in Toyota or Hamamatsu. That evening, we drove out to Tsurugaya where we would be working, and had dinner at Pastor Sugiyama's home. They welcomed us enthusiastically, and we enjoyed the first of many delicious meals that Mrs. Sugiyama would prepare for us. After dinner, they talked about the work of the church, and gave us an idea of what they wanted us to do—which didn't seem like very much. They were happy to hear that I could play the organ—but that wasn't a particularly strong calling for me at that point.

Sunday, July 19, 1983 was the first day of our new assignment. We both woke up feeling rather low in spirits after our discussion of the night before. We hadn't wanted this assignment and now we were wondering why we had been sent here. Had the Lord really called us to this place? We went to Tsurugaya for the morning service at 10:30. The service was held in the large meeting room of the Nursery School. Only four people attended besides the Sugiyama family and we increased the number to ten. We had heard about all the problems that had hindered the growth of this congregation since the work had started there ten years earlier. Those problems had resulted in many members leaving. Now the task was to build it up again, and also work toward building a church building. The Nursery School was intended to be a means of reaching into the community and bringing the gospel to many people in this rather new suburb.

Our first impressions of the city of Sendai were not very positive either. The part of the city where we lived those first few months was an older part of the city. The streets were narrow and the curved routes soon helped to confuse our sense of direction—and there weren't many street signs that we could read. One of our first days there, we tried to go to the Immigration Office and City Office to take care of our visas and alien registrations—we couldn't find Immigration, but did get to the City Office, only to find that there was no parking available. In frustration, we drove home and took a taxi. People kept telling us what a nice city Sendai was, but during those first few days, Nagoya and Toyota looked so much better. We felt like we had gone back twenty years.

We wrote to our children and not trying to hide our frustrations, told them how we felt about being in this new place. In response, Joel wrote and scolded us for “gripping” about Sendai. In my next family letter to the children, I wrote:

We didn’t think of it as “gripping”—we were just letting you in on our adjustment pains. Lowell & Carol Erdahl say in their book that everyone needs a place where they can be at their worst, and home is usually that place. So I guess we’ve unloaded some of our frustrations on you, our family. There’s always an adjustment period in any new place, and cold, dreary weather doesn’t help.

After we started walking to various places, we gradually discovered that Sendai was rather nice—a feeling that grew with each year that we lived there. We discovered that the *Shinkansen* station area was the nicest we had seen in Japan. We also learned to appreciate why Sendai was called *mori no miyako*, the city of trees. Most of the major streets in the city were lined with trees. The downtown area, the city center, was mostly flattened by bombs during the war, and it had been rebuilt into a modern city. We even learned to enjoy the older parts of the city—after we started finding our way around. We gradually learned to know about the various scenic places within the city, and in the neighboring areas—to the extent that when we had visitors from other places, we hardly had enough time to show them everything. We complained about the weather when we first got there, but we did get some hot, sunny days before the summer was over. We adjusted to a rainy season that started later than what we had been used to and lasted until near the end of July. By October of that first year, I wrote to our children that the climate reminded me of Saskatchewan—I was beginning to feel very much at home.

Our mission work continued to go very slowly. Since we didn’t have a church building, it was difficult to start any classes. We helped with the Sunday School and the Sunday service. Lars started to take his turn at preaching. I helped with the *fujinkai* Bible study for the women. Lars accompanied Pastor Sugiyama when they called on all the homes in the Tsurugaya area to invite them to church. He also took turns with the pastor to stay in the office at the Nursery school so that the pastor could have a day off. When he noticed that a lot of the bikes and trikes at the school needed repair, he took that on as a project. He commented in a letter to our children: “I’m probably the highest paid bicycle repair man in Sendai.”

We moved to the mission house at Dainohara the middle of December—we had made a trip to Toyota to load all our belongings on to a truck which hauled it to Sendai. We were able to get settled quite well by Christmas time. Dan Eichhorst and his fiancée, Chiyo Sato, spent Christmas with us which helped to alleviate the loneliness of our first Christmas by ourselves. (Dan, an English teacher in a neighboring city, had spent a month with us earlier while recuperating from an illness.) We were enjoying our new home and gradually getting more involved with the mission of the church.

During this period of getting settled in Sendai and starting our new work, Lars seemed to be functioning quite well. There were some difficulties—he had a hard time understanding the work-men who did the renovating on the house before we moved to Dainohara. They spoke the Tohoku dialect, which is difficult for anyone not accustomed to it. This was particularly frustrating for Lars because he had always had good rapport with the carpenters and other workers that he had worked with in the Tokai area. He also had some problems understanding Pastor Sugiyama who spoke quite fast. They were starting to make plans for the church building, and Lars always went with the pastor when they talked to contractors or architects. He was able to contribute ideas, and give some advice based on his long experience with building projects in the mission.

There were a couple of incidents during those first few months in Sendai that were probably related to his memory problems. We sometimes walked downtown to a shopping area and as we often had different errands or interests, we would each go our own way and arrange when and where we would meet to go home. One day, I got to our prearranged place to meet Lars and he didn't come. I waited and waited, and finally went home—only to find that he was there. He had forgotten that we were to meet and come home together.

On another occasion, Wyn and Tara Flaten were visiting us, and I had taken them sightseeing while Lars had stayed at home. We had arranged to meet downtown at a set time, but when we got there, he didn't show up. He was surprised when I called him, as he thought he was supposed to wait at home until we came back.

After we had been in Sendai a few months and settled into our home, Lars asked me to take charge of the mission financial records—something he had always done before. At the time, I thought that he was only thinking of us sharing some of the duties related to our mission work, but later I suspected that doing that kind of work was becoming difficult for him. He still handled our income tax, which was always done with a tax consultant. In 1986, for the first time I went along to the Income Tax Office, and we filed our forms together. When we checked our papers before we started with the consultant, we noticed that we didn't have our salary statements along, so I had to hurry home to get them—something that he would not have forgotten a few years earlier. The next year, I noted in my diary that I worked on our income tax forms—no mention of Lars doing it with me. After we came back to the USA and visited the Social Security Office to apply for his Social Security, we learned that we had a gap of six years when we had not paid into Social Security. He had failed to file the necessary form—and then had wondered why they sent us a refund each year.

We both developed quite a busy schedule after being in Sendai for about a year. We each had some English classes that were not connected with the work of the Tsurugaya church. We had not gone out and looked for classes. These all came from requests—either through other missionaries, or through personal contacts. We each had classes at the YWCA, which turned out to be very good opportunities for witness. We did start English classes at Tsurugaya in the spring of 1984—when the new school year started. I had a class for neighborhood women which included a Bible study. We also had Saturday afternoon classes for elementary and middle school students some of whom came to Sunday School. Until these classes started, it was actually hard for us to get used to quiet Saturdays at home because we had been so busy on Saturdays in Toyota. Lars started an English Bible class on Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour. I worked with the Sunday School on Sundays, and played the organ for the morning worship service. Lars took his turn preaching about twice a month. There were no meetings on Sunday evenings, and that was also difficult to get used to—we felt so useless sitting at home on Sunday evenings. Later, after we got the new church building, we tried having Sunday evening services, but so few attended—and no new contacts—so it was soon dropped. We also participated in the Bible Study and Prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings held in the Sugiyama's living room.

Besides our responsibilities in Sendai, Lars was serving on the mission Building Committee, and I was secretary on the Executive Committee. To carry out those jobs, we made frequent trips to Tokyo and elsewhere. Those were quite enjoyable times as it gave us a chance to see fellow missionaries, and sometimes to get back to the areas where we had worked prior to coming to the Tohoku area. We found that traveling in this more northern area on the Tohoku Expressway was more pleasant than the crowded Tomei, and the Tohoku *Shinkansen* was also less crowded. After having lived in Sendai for a little

more than a year, we had decided that we liked the area. The scenery was lovely, and the weather generally was quite pleasant.

In March of 1984 Lars attended his first District Convention as a part of the Higashi District. After over thirty years in the Tokai district where he knew most of the pastors, this was quite a change as he knew only a very few at this convention. The District Executive Committee was discussing the plans for a church building at Tsurugaya—and with that discussion came many alternative suggestions considering the future of both of our churches in Sendai. (There was another JELC church downtown.) That made for a feeling of uncertainty, too, as we were hoping for a church building to carry out our work, but so many things had to be considered before that decision could be made.

Our social life in Sendai was anything but boring. There were many missionaries from various denominations, and we were able to get to know many of them. Our closest friends were Bob and Betty Boatwright, Southern Baptist missionaries, and Bill and Nonie Draper, of the Episcopal church. An English worship service was held once a month on a Sunday afternoon, followed by a potluck supper, and this provided a time for good fellowship and getting to know other foreigners. We also had many guests who came to visit us—missionary and Japanese friends from the Tokai area, and friends from overseas. Our guest book has many entries that remind us of the great times we had when we were able to share our home with friends. A few relatives also visited us during our years in Sendai—Carl and Norman Beil, Brenda Nelson, Karl Ingulsrud, RoseAline Begalke, and Phil and Mildred Lindquist.

Towards the end of 1984, Lars was feeling more and more stressed because of the problems he was experiencing in preparing and delivering sermons. His memory problems, too, were persisting. It was probably in 1984 that Lars read an article in *Time* magazine about Alzheimer's Disease. He showed me the article and said, "I think that's what I have." When I read the article—it was the first time either one of us had heard about this disease—I could see many similarities between the description of the symptoms of the disease and Lars' problems. But when I read that there was no treatment or cure for it, I couldn't see any advantage in having him think that he had this ailment, so I said, "Oh, you're not nearly that bad,"—and dismissed it. I couldn't dismiss it entirely from my mind, though, and the seed of concern that was sown by that article started to grow.

In January of 1985, we went to our Annual Mission Conference at Amagi San So. That conference was very significant in the story of our lives as we met Dr. Lee Griffin there. He was the main speaker for the conference. He was a psychiatrist under the employ of the American Lutheran Church, a former missionary to Ethiopia, where he had served as a doctor. The Mission Office employed him to counsel missionaries. His lectures at the conference were extremely interesting and helpful, but more than that, he counseled privately with each missionary or missionary couple. After his experience in Minneapolis two years earlier, Lars was not eager to talk with a psychiatrist again. But after hearing the first lecture by Dr. Griffin, he realized that there was more than one kind of psychiatrist, and he agreed to go and talk with him. We had an hour session with Dr. Griffin at 6:30 one morning. He let us talk for the first twenty or thirty minutes and we told him about our situation. He then proceeded to "give it back" to us, and we were both amazed at how perceptive he was and how well he understood our situation. He suggested that Lars' memory loss and difficulty in preaching would only worsen unless he got out of his present situation. Working with a very efficient, fast-thinker-talker-worker like Pastor Sugiyama would only add to his stress, and if he could get out from under the stress, he might have a chance for recovery. He recommended early retirement, or a change of assignment, or a change in the present assignment. Though he

didn't tell us at that time, he suspected that Lars was in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease.

The conference was over the next day, and we drove to Toyota. The next day, Sunday, Lars preached at Koromo and Motomachi churches, and found it so much easier to preach there where people knew him and understood his Japanese without too much difficulty. We thought about Dr. Griffin's suggestion that we have a change of assignment, and we realized that it would have to be a familiar place for that plan to work. Since the Knutsons had left Toyota and so far there was no replacement, we thought about asking to go back there—but we soon decided that it would not be wise. (One of the ladies at the Motomachi church had a different idea. She said that they had been dreaming that someday Joel or Leon would get married and come back to Toyota as missionaries, and live in our old house, and then we would come and live with them.)

We went to Mikkabi that Sunday evening, and many of the "old-timers" gathered for the service, happy to be together again. We might have thought about that place as a possibility, but there was no opening there. We had come to the conclusion that we would take Dr. Griffin's advice and opt for early retirement, so on our return trip we stopped in Tokyo and had another meeting with him. We told him that we felt that the summer of 1985 was too soon, and not fair to the Sugiyamas and the church at Tsurugaya. We started negotiating with the JELC and with Doug Swendseid to arrange for our retirement beginning in the summer of 1986. Since we were due to come back to the USA for a two month home leave that summer, Dr. Griffin recommended that Lars get an appointment with Dr. Manfred-Meier—a neuro-psychologist at the University of Minnesota hospital. When we wrote to Doug and told him of our plans, he responded by suggesting that we not make a final decision until after seeing this doctor. We did tell the Sugiyamas of our plans. They were very disappointed as they felt our work together was just getting going. They agreed to make some changes in Lars' responsibilities.

Since preaching was the most stressful part of his work, he gradually stopped taking his turn on Sunday mornings—he sometimes showed a movie with a Christian message, and then Pastor Sugiyama would make comments on it to make it more meaningful for the congregation. Pastor Sugiyama still wanted his contribution in the services, and when Lars no longer preached, the pastor would call on him for the closing prayer. He continued this for some time, but eventually that, too, became very stressful as he struggled to find the right words. He was sometimes called on to pray in English at other meetings—the English worship service, or other gatherings. In the past, it had always bothered him to hear people use clichés—in preaching or in public prayers. Now he had come to the place where he was doing the very thing that he had found offensive in others—he was becoming unable to use fresh and creative language. Whenever he prayed in English—whether at home or in public, he always started with "We thank you, Lord, for all of the provisions you have made for body and for soul..." There was certainly nothing wrong with that prayer, but the fact that he always started his prayers in the same way was not like him. Lars also chose to stay home on most Wednesday evenings instead of attending the Bible study and prayer meeting at Sugiyama's apartment. He was always more tired in the evenings, and he found it stressful to sit through a meeting that he felt could have been conducted in a more effective way.

A highlight of that winter was our trip to China. We visited JohnE in Hefei, Anhui Province where he had been teaching English. We had an enjoyable eleven days as JohnE showed us around the city where he lived and worked, and also Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai. We both enjoyed the trip immensely, and Lars coped very well with all the changes and the traveling. Having always been a lover of Chinese food, he especially enjoyed the feasts we were served. We could not have taken such a trip if JohnE had not been there to be our guide.

In March of that year our mission and the LCA mission had a joint retreat at Kwansei Gakuin near Osaka. Lars preached at the communion service. In his sermon, he spoke about his experiences with pain. At the time, I felt that there was much lacking in his sermon—it didn't compare with sermons he had given in the past. Though none of the other missionaries said anything about it then—except to thank him—several years later, some of those who knew him well told me that they had noticed that there was something wrong. It just did not sound like Lars.

In May, Doug Swendseid visited us in Sendai, and we asked him if the mission would agree to our staying until 1986 even though Lars' work would be minimal. He responded by saying that he didn't believe in measuring mission work by set tasks. He realized that our "being" in Sendai was of value, and since we had always worked as a team, they would leave it up to us and the Sugiyamas to work out our position in the work. Between the two of us, we were filling one position, and that was all that was needed in the Tsurugaya church at that time. After that, Lars started referring to himself as the *kanai* (word for wife, but literally, "the one in the house.")

Lars had gotten started with his latest hobby—collecting and refinishing antique furniture—especially *tansus* (chests of drawers). He had space in our attic to work at this hobby, and it seemed to be very good for him as it gave him satisfaction in being able to accomplish something. When guests who had similar interests visited us, he enjoyed taking them around to the various antique shops. He bought books on the subject, and became quite knowledgeable about these antiques from this northern area of Japan. This hobby made his last two to three years in Japan endurable—he was still able to work with his hands.

When we were making preparations for traveling to the USA for our home leave in the summer of 1985, Lars called our friend, Kjell Thronaas again to ask if he could travel on one of their ships. He wanted to avoid air travel, as he was still blaming jet lag for his confusion after making a trip. There were a couple of possibilities, but in the end, nothing worked out, so we flew to Seattle on June 30. We stayed at LBI for about three days, giving us a chance to get rested, though neither one of us felt much jet lag this time. Joel had met us as he was visiting in the area. He had driven our car from Minnesota, and we all drove to Montana for the Ingulsrud Family Reunion. We spent an enjoyable three days at Flathead Lake Lutheran Bible Camp. JohnE had arrived from China in time to join the reunion. Usually at these reunions, Lars would have a leading part in the family worship, being the oldest and the only pastor. But at this one, JohnE led the service, and two of the brothers, Glenn and Arnold gave short talks. Lars did have the closing prayer. JohnE, Joel and we then drove to Swift Current where we spent a few days.

Dad was in the hospital, and was not expected to live much longer. Dad and Mom had reluctantly given up their independent life and entered a nursing home in Swift Current in 1985. Their house was sold and for the first time since they had started their homestead in 1917, there was no longer a Jacob Nelson family home. That was rather difficult for me to accept as I remembered the home where we had enjoyed so many happy occasions. It had always been a home where visitors were welcome, and we children sometimes thought that Mom was hospitable to a fault. No matter who came, or at what hour, the table would be set and food served. On the farm, she had always kept the shelves in the cellar filled with jars of a variety of foods which she had canned, and the bread-crock full of home-baked bread. In their house in town, the freezer in the basement was always full of baked goodies, and she continued her custom of canning a lot of chicken every fall—so there was always something that could be prepared in a hurry when anyone dropped in. Now that was all in the past. We visited Dad in the hospital, and Mom in the nursing home where she remained alone after Dad had broken a hip.

After a couple of days in Edmore, we arrived in Minneapolis. We spent the next four days at our Mission Retreat at Bethel College. Dr. Griffin was there, and we had a long talk with him again. He had made arrangements for Lars to see Dr. Manfred-Meier at the University Hospital the following week.

On Sunday, July 21, we went to our sponsoring church in Hudson, Wisconsin. They had helped support us for many years, and always welcomed us so graciously when we were on furlough. This time, Lars was not able to preach as he had so many times before, so we shared the sermon. We used the "Parable of the Sower," and gave examples of responses to the gospel in our work in Japan. This way, Lars was able to share some stories, and I could help keep the message "on track." This was the last time that he gave a deputation message.

On July 23, Lars had his appointment with Dr. Manfred-Meier at the University of Minnesota Hospital. While in the Cities, we were enjoying the hospitality of the Gilmores at North Oaks. We were also spending time with Joel and Leon in their apartment in Minneapolis, helping them with some of the housekeeping. The next day after Lars' appointment, I called Dr. Griffin who gave me the report of his discussion with Dr. Meier. They were quite certain that it was Alzheimer's Disease, but they wanted him to have further tests. They made an appointment for him to see a neurologist at the University of Minnesota Hospital the following Tuesday.

While we waited for that appointment, we tried to control our feelings of devastation—we had told Lars what the doctors had said, and he reacted more calmly than the rest of us. We were hoping that the other tests that he was to have would find other causes for his problems. We were busy with other business—mission and pension office, some medical appointments that I had, getting our Minnesota drivers' licenses and shopping. Lars was not doing any driving—if the boys weren't with us, I drove as he became too easily confused shifting from driving on the left side to the right side of the road. We also got some visiting with friends and relatives squeezed into our schedule. Thanks to Gene and Vicky, we even enjoyed a Roger Williams concert at the Ordway—an early anniversary gift. One evening at the Gilmores, Marlice had us play a game of Chinese Checkers which Lars could not handle at all.

At his appointment on July 30, Lars met Dr. Knopman, the neurologist, for the first time. He had several blood tests taken, and they had also studied the brain scans that had been done in 1983. Dr. Knopman concurred with Dr. Meier's diagnosis that it was probably Alzheimer's Disease, but said that the blood tests might show some other cause for his symptoms.

We waited rather impatiently for the results of the blood tests during the next week. JohnE was also in the Cities at this time, and Faith and Eric came from Massachusetts. Ruth and Mike had just moved to Stoughton, Wisconsin and we were all planning to go there for our own family reunion. However, we couldn't leave the Cities until we got the results of the tests in case Lars needed more tests. We continued a schedule of visiting relatives and friends, shopping, and helping Joel and Leon get more settled in their apartment. One by one, the results of the blood tests came in, and there was nothing abnormal. The boys were happy each time a good report came back, but I was hoping that something would be found that would account for his symptoms—so that Alzheimer's Disease could be ruled out. Finally on August 5, Dr. Knopman called with the result of the last blood test. This one was different. It showed that Lars' Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> level was very low, and Dr. Knopman stated that this could be the cause of his memory loss. He wanted Lars to come in for further testing the next day, as there might be a possibility that Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> injections could help him. Dr. Knopman warned against being overly optimistic—he told us that we should be "cautiously optimistic." The test the next day confirmed that his body was not absorbing any Vitamin B<sup>12</sup>—a condition

that often occurs as people grow older and the “intrinsic factor” in the stomach that absorbs this vitamin ceases to function. (Reports show that this condition is quite common in people from northern Europe—Scandinavians—especially those who have blue eyes and gray early in life.) The Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> therapy was started right away with his first injection at the neurology clinic. The nurse then gave me a lesson in how to give him the injections—which I continued from then on.

In spite of Dr. Knopman’s warning about being overly optimistic, we were a happy family that traveled to Ruth and Mike’s new home for that week-end. It was a wonderful two days that we spent together—getting reacquainted with Rickie and Steve, seeing the new area that was now the Grubel’s new neighborhood, enjoying JohnE’s Chinese dinner on Saturday, and Mike’s grilled turkey and Eric’s Dutch pancakes after worshiping together on Sunday morning, taking family pictures, and just getting caught up with each other again. Ruth and Mike were hardly moved, but we all managed to enjoy their new house, and even helped unpack some dishes and other furnishings.

We returned to St. Paul to pack up and leave for Japan. JohnE settled in to one of the efficiency apartments at the Mission Apartments to stay until he would leave for Columbia University in the fall. Joel and Leon were in their apartment not far from there to continue their studies and jobs. Lars and I flew to Seattle and Japan on August 14. The instructions from Dr. Knopman and Dr. Griffin were that Lars was to avoid stressful situations—which included preaching. With the hope that the therapy and these working conditions might improve Lars’ health, we were ready to go on and finish the last years of our service in Japan.



## 42. Role Reversal

**W**e started our last term by vacationing at Lake Nojiri for two weeks which as always was very restful and enjoyable. We swam and biked and visited with friends—and got caught up on our sleep—just what Nojiri was meant for! Lars did get the boats out for one week, but he didn't do much sailing. On our trip to Nojiri, we had taken turns driving during the nine hour trip, but going back home on August 30, Lars drove except for two hours when I spelled him off. A couple hours from Sendai, the transmission on the car went bad, so we limped home. It was two weeks before the car was repaired, but we managed by walking, taking buses, or being picked up by Sugiyamas or class members.

One of the first things we did after resuming our work was to write a letter to Pastor Uno, the District President, explaining Lars' limitations and the Mission's approval of our plan for "role-reversal"—I would do the mission work and Lars would do only what he felt able to do. The Sugiyamas and the church council at Tsurugaya readily agreed to this plan which would make it possible for us to stay and work for the coming year at least. Lars did continue with some English classes, and he had an English Bible class at Tsurugaya on Sunday mornings. He always attended the services at church. He often showed videos or movies at Sunday School. He was getting more and more interested in his *tansu* projects—often going to antique or second-hand stores and finding old *tansus* that he brought home to refinish. I was serving on the Mission Executive Committee and when I had to make trips to Tokyo and other cities for those meetings Lars sometimes had to fill in for me at English classes.

After spending weeks in the hospital, Dad had gradually grown weaker and passed away on October 16, 1985, two months after he had reached the age of 90. I went back to Canada for the funeral. Since all of my brothers and sisters were able to be in Swift Current for the funeral, it was another family reunion.

During the week that I was gone, Lars took my classes. When I came back a little earlier than the Monday class had expected, they were actually disappointed because they had enjoyed Lars' classes so much the previous week. From their discussion, I gathered that it was more of a story-telling session than teaching.

Doug Swendseid, our area secretary, visited us the first part of November and talked with us about our work. He suggested that we set a deadline for making our decision as to when to resign. We got the impression that he thought we should stay at least until the new church was built. When we first came back I had thought that we would stay only until 1986, but gradually that mind set changed, and we agreed that it would be better to plan to stay until 1987, especially since the JELC indicated that there might not be a replacement for us until then.

In a letter to our children dated November 20, 1985, Lars wrote the following:

We give thanks for each of you and for all you mean to us, and hope and pray that all is well, and if you have problems, and who doesn't, we trust you will be coping with them and leaning on the Lord for guidance.

I am thankful that I can write again. You may not have noticed it, but when we were all down in Wisconsin, I was not able to write and had trouble reading, too. I still have some trouble reading. It seems like my eyes race ahead of my brain. My hair is not as white as it was, and my beard is stiffer again. I'm not out of the woods yet, but it looks hopeful. I teach one English Bible class and a women's English class down at the YW, and sometimes pinch hit for Mother when she is gone.

That letter made our children very happy and we were beginning to think that the Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> therapy was having a positive effect. However, a couple of weeks later, I wrote to them:

The last few weeks Daddy has felt more stress again, and we wonder if it's because he's getting the shots only twice a month. We wrote to Dr. Knopman and asked if he could have them once a week—dividing the double dosage into two with shorter intervals in between...

Dr. Knopman agreed to this, but I'm sure he knew that it probably would not make any difference. The benefit of the more frequent shots was that it made Lars feel less anxious—most likely only a help psychologically.

As usual, there were a lot of extra activities and entertaining during the Christmas season, and Lars found those to be particularly stressful. I had one of the English classes at our house for lunch one day, and asked Lars to have the table prayer in English—which he did, but with a great deal of difficulty. At the Nursery school Christmas program, the program got longer than expected, and Lars had to leave before it was all over as he became tense and agitated.

I was getting more and more involved with the work of the church—and enjoying it more as I was able to have more Bible studies and Catechism instruction groups. Lars kept very occupied with his wood work—and was always happy to show off his finished products to guests when they came. He worked in the attic of the house, so was able to be by himself and work without interruption. He had not lost his sense of humor—one morning in our devotions, part of our reading was a verse from Proverbs: *"It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman."* He thought he should make that his slogan!

By March of 1986, we thought that he had shown some improvement, except that he sometimes found it very stressful to attend the Sunday morning worship service. If there were children being noisy during the service, or if the pastor's sermons were too long and difficult (he still felt strongly that the gospel should be presented in a way that ordinary people would get the message), he would be very tense by the end of the service. This tenseness was beginning to change to uncontrollable shaking—he would just have to leave, and would walk home—close to an hour, but that would calm him down. About that time, we read two books that we both found helpful: *Stress/Unstress* and *Self-Care/Well Care* by Dr. Keith W. Sehnert, a Christian doctor.

Even though Lars was not doing any preaching or any other active missionary tasks, he did make a very significant contribution as a part of the Building committee for the



25th Wedding Anniversary, Jan. 23, 1986, Sendai.

new church. They had been working on plans for the new building for about two years with one architect. Lars didn't like his design and neither did a lot of the members. Since this architect was not the type to take suggestions well, they were all feeling very frustrated. Finally at staff meeting one day, Lars told Pastor Sugiyama that he should get other plans and estimates. The pastor was reluctant to do this as he had been working with this firm for almost two years, and didn't know how he could drop him. Lars went with him to the architect's office, and told them in no uncertain terms that their plan was "*Dame!*"—which means, "It's no good"—and that they wanted to get some other plans. They brought it up at the *sokai* (annual meeting) and the members voted unanimously to get some bids from other companies. It wasn't long before one of these firms came up with a good plan that everyone liked—and they all thanked Lars for speaking up so strongly. They knew that as Japanese, they couldn't have done as he did. After that episode, Pastor Sugiyama suggested that we would have to stay until after the church was built because he needed Lars around to say "*Dame desu*" in order to get the kind of building they wanted.

It seemed that attending church on Sundays was the most stressful for Lars—perhaps it was because he sensed his own limitations more keenly in a situation where he should have been taking an active part. I noticed a similar reaction whenever he was with some of his colleagues—at a conference, or even at Lake Nojiri. They could all talk about their work and mission activities, and that only made his inadequacies more apparent. For that reason, working on his *tansus* and being able to show his work to friends and anyone interested was a real boost to his morale.

Lars had continued teaching a class at the YWCA, but he often forgot to go. They would call and remind him, and he would have to hurry and rush to the class. At the end of March that year, he decided not to continue with that class. He had enjoyed it because it was a Reading Class—they would read books or essays together and then discuss them. He still had an English Bible class at the church on Sunday mornings, but that was for only two or three people and he could handle that. He helped with jobs around the house—he usually did the vacuuming. He enjoyed going for a walk in the Dainohara

park almost every morning, and we often went together. He would also walk or ride his bike downtown. On one occasion in June of 1986, he couldn't find where he had left his bike in a bike parking area, and had to walk home. He went back to the place later in the day, and was able to find it. We drove to Amagi San So for the annual Mission Conference and Retreat the first part of April. This was our last conference as the following year it was held in the fall, after we had left Japan.

Joel and Ruth Gilmore had decided to get married in June 1986, and we were able to make the trip back to St. Paul for the wedding. We were gone only one week, from June 22 to 30, and Lars seemed to take the trip better than I did. I was the one who suffered from jet lag during that trip. We rented one of the mission apartments where our whole family stayed. While we were in the Twin Cities, Lars was able to have an appointment with Dr. Knopman, and we were encouraged that the doctor thought that there had been some improvement. However, Lars hardly slept the night before the wedding because he was worried that he might be called on to have a part in the ceremony. Joel would have wanted that, but we had agreed that it would not be possible—but it took some talking to assure Lars that he would not be asked to speak. Ruth's father, Pastor John Gilmore officiated at the outdoor ceremony, and JohnE presided over the service, so we were able to convince Lars that they would take care of everything. It seemed that he was able to relax and enjoy the celebration. The reception was at Gilmore's house.

The rest of that summer and fall saw our "empty nest" filled up again. Joel and Ruth came to Japan after their wedding, and spent the summer traveling and vacationing at Lake Nojiri. Leon and their cousin Karl also spent the summer in Japan. Another cousin, Brenda, came in August for two to three weeks. Joel and Ruth had made plans to work in Japan for some months, so they moved in with us the first part of September. Since Joel got a two-year contract as an interpreter with a company as soon as they got to Sendai, they were with us for the rest of our time in Japan. Later that fall, my sister Mildred and brother-in-law Phil visited us for about a week. JohnE spent five weeks in Japan doing research for his dissertation for his doctor's degree, quite a bit of that time with us in Sendai. A friend of Joel's visited him and Ruth off and on for a few weeks. When they went away for a week-end trip in December, I noted in my diary, "First time in months to be by ourselves in the house."

During those busy weeks, Lars seemed to contend quite well. He worked on his wood-work, made regular trips to antique shops, and took his regular walks. Since he had had a wood burning furnace installed in the back porch, he was also kept busy cutting wood. He'd notice when a house in the neighborhood was torn down and then ask the contractor for the wood—and they were always happy to have a place to unload it. One of those times, his plan to acquire more firewood got him into trouble with the rest of us. The company that tore down a house near us brought all the scrap wood and dumped it in our front yard. It took Lars and Joel and Joel's friend a couple of days to move it to the back yard—I was furious, and Joel, too, wasn't able to conceal his irritation. It was perhaps Lars' lack of good judgment that allowed the wood to be dumped in the front yard, but the practical side of him insisted that it was good to get all that wood. It did give him something to do for some weeks—actually until the end of April 1987—as he had to cut it up into sizes that could be burned in the furnace—and it was mostly used up by summer.

About a week before Christmas, I had invited all the teachers from the nursery school at Tsurugaya to come for dinner one evening. Shortly before they arrived, Lars had a very severe dizzy spell—so bad that he had to go to bed, and couldn't even get up to greet the guests. This may have been a recurrence of the *Manierre's Syndrome* that he had had two or three times in earlier years, but I thought it was interesting that it hit him just before a social event that likely would have been quite difficult for him.

Dr. Lee and Cynthia Griffin visited us just before Christmas. We had a good talk with them, but at that time, his advice to us was mainly in connection with retirement plans. We had gradually come to the conclusion that we would prefer to retire in the Twin Cities area. Dr. Griffin agreed that because we had so many friends in that area, and because we would have access to good medical facilities, that would be a wise choice. He questioned our decision to wait until August, but when we explained our reasons, he understood and agreed. His main concern was that we should get settled before the transition to a new Mission Board when the church merger became effective.

The first service in our new church building was held on December 21, a very happy occasion. Then we celebrated our last Christmas in Japan. Having Joel and Ruth with us, we had an enjoyable family Christmas, and the church Christmas was special because we had the new church, and three baptisms. Two weeks later we celebrated the dedication of the new building, a great celebration. At the annual meeting of the congregation later that month, we sensed a good spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm amongst the twelve members. We were happy for the positive tone of this, our last congregational meeting of a church in Japan. We felt that we could leave with some confidence that things were going to move from now on—and we could go home and relax. Even though Lars had not been able to do the work that he would have if he had been well, he had a sense of satisfaction in that he had contributed to the building of the church. From then on, we started winding down and prepared to leave our work in Japan.



*Tsurugaya Lutheran Church, Sendai*



### *43. Sayonara and Return to USA*

**I**n January 1987, the mission chairman asked us to go to Shizuoka to help Evie Tuff pack. She had been having difficulty doing her work as she had some of the same symptoms that Lars had—confusion, forgetting, and just not functioning well. Since she needed help in making decisions with regard to her packing, and also the actual packing, we were asked to go and assist her. It was felt that I knew her better than anyone else, so could give her some guidance. It turned out that I wasn't much help after all because on the second day that we were there, I fell on the sidewalk and chipped a bone in my elbow. The rest of the time, I could only help with sorting and directing. Marion Eskildsen came and helped, too, and if she hadn't, it's doubtful that we would have accomplished much because Lars was not able to see what needed to be done, and then do it with any efficiency. From that experience, I began to get a realization of what our own packing was going to be like.

Since we had quite a bit of company in the spring, we didn't do much actual packing until after our entertaining. Having had my arm in a sling for three weeks and not being able to use it freely for many more also slowed the preparations. The missionaries who were assigned to replace us, Mark and Shirley Luttio spent Easter week-end with us. My sister, RoseAline and her friend came in early May, and Ruth and Mike, Ricky and Steve visited us the latter part of the month. I had continued with my classes until the first part of May, when Ruth (Joel's wife) started taking some of them. There was a lot of activity around our house as besides our guests, Joel and Ruth often had friends who stopped in. Lars coped with it all quite well—there were times when he would go for a walk just to get by himself. He started walking to church on Sunday mornings when the weather was fit—and then sometimes walk home again if he became too tense. It was about a forty minute walk each way. The physical exercise was very beneficial.

We got at the big job of packing in a serious way the first part of June. Joel and Ruth moved into an apartment where they would live until they returned to the USA in 1988.

They were close enough so stopped in often, and were able to take some of our household things to use in their apartment. In earlier years, Lars had been an expert at packing, but I soon realized that he no longer had the ability to make wise decisions about what to pack. Also the actual physical labor of packing and tying up boxes was more than he could manage. Joel had planned to help us, but he had gotten more and more involved in the Japanese company that he worked for and his time was very limited. Since they had come to Japan on a round-trip ticket which would expire at the end of their first year, they made a two week trip to the USA in June.

We packed what we thought we should take back to the US with us. I came to the conclusion that it was easier to let Lars pack some things that I thought we should have sold or given away. Some of the items he probably would not have packed if he had had his former good sense of judgment. I often became impatient and irritable when he made a poor choice or when he couldn't tie up a box without my help—and I realized that I

was having difficulty accepting his limitations. So even though he tried very hard to help and do the things he had done in the past, I had to do most of this task myself. What we didn't pack to take with us, we had to dispose of in various ways. We gave some things away, and at the end had a "moving sale."

Since Lars had collected several of the antique *tansus* that he had refinished, and we had decided to give one to each of our children, we ended up with a large shipment. Besides those items, Lars had a lot of tools which he couldn't part with—and I guess I had a lot of dishes that I couldn't part with. Finally on July 27, we were ready for the moving company, and they loaded our belongings on to two trucks. They weren't able to use the large moving van as it would have blocked the narrow street in front of our house for too long a time. We breathed a sigh of relief when that part of our leaving Japan was over—our shipment was on its way, and we would not see it again until September.

From the latter part of June until we left Sendai, we were kept busy in another way, too. Each class or group that we had been connected with had a farewell party for us. The first farewell was not a party but a recognition at the JELC's Higashi (East) District annual convention in March. Usually, they would call on the retiring missionary for a greeting, but they were aware of Lars' condition so only called us to come forward and acknowledge their words of thanks and farewell. We had written a summary of our years in Japan and sent it to the church office earlier.



*Farewell at JELC Convention, Ichigaya Lutheran Church, Tokyo, August 27, 1986*

During the height of the cherry blossom season in the northern part of Japan, (latter part of April) the Sugiyamas and the women's group from the church gave us a wonderful farewell gift. The gift was a trip to Hirosaki, famous for its beautiful cherry trees, including an overnight stay in a lovely hotel there. We drove by car which was the first time we had gone that far north on the Tohoku Expressway—a lovely, relaxing drive. We both thoroughly enjoyed everything on this refreshing trip. On the way home, we stopped at an *onsen* (hot spring) and also visited missionary friends in Morioka. Those two days of travel in the Tohoku (northeastern) part of Japan made us realize how much we had grown to like this area. Traffic was much lighter, and the scenery less cluttered by industry—maybe something like the mid-west in the US, except for the mountains. Leaving Japan was getting to be more and more difficult. If Lars' health had



been good, we likely would have stayed until after he had reached sixty-five in November.

Besides the packing, the last couple of months were busy with finishing up classes, farewells, and spending some time with the people that we had grown to love during our four years in Sendai. Though the congregation's annual meeting had ended on a very positive note, there was not complete agreement on how the church should carry on its work, and we could not be oblivious to those problems even as we prepared to leave.

One of the farewells was put on by the mission association in Tokyo on May 18. Since there were three couples leaving before the fall conference, they had a special evening to say good-bye to us, the Ericksons and the McGees. We all had dinner together followed by a program and speeches. It was expected that those leaving would respond to the tributes given by colleagues, and since we were with close friends, Lars did give a greeting in response. He was able to speak fairly well, but the tone of what he said was very negative—something about having stayed in Japan too long, and generally pessimistic.

After all of our classes had had farewell parties for us, the last of the farewells was put on by the congregation at Tsurugaya on July 19. I gave the sermon, *A Farewell Prayer*, and a potluck dinner followed the service. As is typical of such affairs in Japan, all those present made a little speech—which became quite emotional for some of us. Lars was spared that ordeal.



*Farewell service at Tsurugaya Lutheran Church, July, 1987*

We left Sendai on July 30 and it was not an easy departure. Even though we had often looked forward to this time when we would be leaving Japan and retiring, now that the time had actually arrived, we had very mixed feelings. I had mixed feelings. Lars was very ready to leave and be away from the stress of the situation. Had Lars been well, he would have left with an upbeat attitude—thankful for the ministry that he had had a part in, but looking forward with excitement to the next phase of our lives. If circumstances had been different, I would have been happy to have stayed for at least one more year—

as the work was very challenging, and Sendai had become a very pleasant place to live. Add to that the fact that our third grand-child was going to be born in Sendai that October. But it was time to leave, and we said our farewells to the people who had come to see us off. The Japanese would have preferred having us leave by train so that they could have given us the big send-off at the station, but instead we simply got into our car and drove off. I was thankful that Lars was able to drive as we left Sendai so that the people saw him in charge of this situation anyway.

Before we were to say our final farewell to Japan, we had some other places to go—first of which was Lake Nojiri. Lars drove part of the eight hour trip, but one or two hours at a time was his limit.

After settling in at the cabin, and having a couple nights of good rest, we both felt happy to be starting our first day of retirement on August 1st. We enjoyed the three weeks we spent there even though it was with the realization that it would be our last regular summer at this place where we had spent so many happy vacations. During those vacations, Lars had always spent a lot of time working on boats and anything that needed repair—he had worked around the boat storage a good part of each day. This time, he did take the boats out of the locker, but was not able to get them rigged. Joel and Ruth took care of those details when they came to the lake later. He didn't do any sailing either—something he had always loved to do—but now he didn't have the confidence that he could handle it. One afternoon when Ruth was having some trouble on the small sailboat, we took the row-boat to go out and help her. He had a great deal of difficulty using the oars—he couldn't coordinate the rowing to make the boat go where we wanted it to go. Swimming was not a problem for him, and we enjoyed our early swim every morning.

We left Lake Nojiri on August 20, headed for Toyota. Lars took his turns at driving which was the last time he did any distance driving. We stopped over-night at Bowman's at Ogaki and arrived at Hotta's at noon the next day. We needed to get rid of our car, and tried to sell it to the dealer where we had bought it. However, we found out that since it was soon due for the required inspection, and being ten years old would require yearly inspection from now on, it was not saleable. Unless someone really wanted it, it would have to be scrapped. We felt it was too good a car to scrap, so we left it with Hottas who could use it on their farm.

We spent Saturday visiting with many friends, Kurokawas, Hori-san, Kato-san, friends at the Labor Center—it was an enjoyable time for Lars to be with these people as they reminisced about the good times that they had had together.

Sunday was an extremely full day with four farewell gatherings. We started out at the morning service at Koromo Church. Lars managed a short greeting, and I gave the sermon. We also helped serve communion which was a very meaningful experience for both of us. There were so many dear friends there. We went to the Motomachi Church for a potluck dinner, and again were able to meet many of the members and other friends there. In the afternoon, Masako-san drove us to Mikkabi where we joined the members there at a service at the mausoleum. Again, Lars gave a greeting and I shared a short message. After the usual picture taking, we went to the church where we had a supper and a farewell service. Several of the people there were from the first meetings that Lars had had in his early ministry, many of whom he had baptized. It was a very special evening.

We stayed at Suzuki's that night and the next day, we rode with Masako-san and Suzuki-san to Hamamatsu—a nostalgic drive as we drove on the same road that we had traveled so many times when our work was in that area. With the new roads the ride was far smoother, and there was much that had changed but still enough of the old to bring

back many memories. Staying with the Nakashimas was like being with family and we were thankful for this opportunity to spend time with them again.

We still had one more stop to make before reaching Tokyo. Our friends of many years, the Nakatas, met us at Mishima and took us to an *onsen* hotel at Shuzenji. The overnight stay at this hotel was their farewell gift to us. They joined us for dinner—a typical Japanese spread—then went home and picked us up the next day. Relaxing in the outdoor hot baths and enjoying the comforts of this lovely Japanese inn was a great way to spend one of our last days in Japan. We took the train to Tokyo the next day and stayed at the Lutheran Center. We took care of our final mission business in the office, and in the evening went to a *tempura* restaurant for one more taste of Japanese cuisine before we left. Even the cook there gave us special service and extra servings when he heard that we were leaving Japan the following day. More friends came to say good-bye that evening, including Inukai-san who had interpreted for Lars many times when we worked in Toyota.

Several friends came to the airport the next day to see us off, and after all the emotional highs of the last week, it was a relief to finally get on the plane and head for the USA. We had always referred to America as our home, but after thirty-five years in Japan, we weren't sure if we were *heading* for home, or *leaving* home, as Faith had said many years earlier. For Lars, it seemed to be a relief to be leaving Japan and the stresses that he had been enduring. The problems of working in another culture, and with a difficult language had not been easy. Had he been healthy, he would have been able to handle those situations—as he had done for the first twenty-eight to thirty years.

It was sad to see him leave Japan in this weakened condition—he who had arrived in Japan full of enthusiasm in 1952, and for years had been such a strong worker. But he himself had always said that the Lord uses our weaknesses—not our strengths, so we could only trust that the Lord would bless the work that he was now leaving and continue to use him in some way to bring honor and glory to God.

We arrived in Seattle on August 27 and stayed at LBI for three days. While there, we had a chance to visit some friends and relatives, but our main purpose in spending time there was to look over the retirement community, Providence Point, being built adjacent to LBI. We had put our names on a list for a home there a few years earlier and wanted to look at it again. We were favorably impressed, and did ask them to put a “hold” on one of the units that would be built next year, but we didn't feel ready to make any commitment at that time. We flew to the Twin Cities on August 30 and spent our first night at the Gilmore's at North Oaks. The next day we were able to move into our apartment at the Mission Apartments where we were to live during our six month terminal furlough. We felt at home in the Twin Cities, and realized that we were much more interested in retiring in this area rather than in Seattle. We had many friends and relatives here—we felt that this was our “community.”

We had planned to start looking at houses as soon as we got a little settled. We did look at one that a friend in St. Anthony Park was interested in selling, but it was not suitable. On Thursday of that first week, Alton Knutson called and said that they had found a house for sale in Forest Lake that they thought might interest us. (When they had first looked at this house, they had said, “This looks like a house that Grace would like.”) Lars' brother, Glenn, was spending a couple of days with us on his way to North Dakota and he went with us the next day to look at the house. We were favorably impressed—and Glenn, being used to California prices, thought that at \$81,000, it was a steal. We could assume the mortgage, which meant we didn't have to go through the hassle of getting a loan, and the monthly payments were to be around \$400. Lars wanted to make the decision right away—he liked the house, and thought it looked like it was well built. I wasn't quite that eager—we had hoped to find a place in the St. Anthony Park area, but

realized that prices would be somewhat higher there. We called our children—the ones who were in the USA. JohnE advised caution, Faith thought it sounded right for us, and Ruth and Mike would come for the week-end and help us decide. They came on Saturday evening, and after church on Sunday we drove out to Forest Lake and met the realtor (whose father had been the previous owner) and went over the house thoroughly. Ruth and Mike were impressed, too, and since they had had experience in buying and selling houses, they went with us and the realtor to Perkins Restaurant for coffee and we talked business for a couple of hours. At the end of that time, we had signed the purchase agreement, and later that evening the realtor brought the completed papers and the keys to the house. Exactly one week after we had arrived in the Twin Cities! We could hardly believe it ourselves. In later years, we read about all the things one should consider before buying a house—we hadn't checked any list, but were very fortunate that everything worked out very well. At the time we made the decision, I knew so little about purchasing a house—I didn't even know the terms used. Lars was not able to handle all the details, so we were thankful for the help Ruth and Mike gave us, and as we looked back in later years, we were convinced that the Lord had been leading us. It turned out to fit our needs in more ways than we realized at the time. If we had spent much time looking at several other options, Lars would have become very confused. The quick decision saved him—and me—a lot of stress.

The first couple of weeks after making the decision about the house, we were busy with a lot of other business. We went to our Pension Office and made application for Lars' pension, and the same at the Social Security Office. We met with a Financial Planner, opened our bank account in a bank in Forest Lake and then applied for our first credit cards. We also met with a lawyer to start redoing our wills. The closing on the house was set for October 30, but since no one lived in the house, we were allowed to start remodeling the kitchen. Our shipment from Japan was due to come about the middle of September, and as the basement in the house was empty, we arranged to have the delivery made directly to the house in Forest Lake. Thus we were spared the problem of where to store all of our stuff. During this time, we were also shopping for a new car. We were still driving the Tercel, but needed something better. Leon came back from Japan where he had spent the summer training in the Performing Arts Center, and helped us decide on the 1986 Toyota Camry. All of this in the first two weeks after we had arrived back from Japan.

## 44. *Diagnosis: Alzheimer's Disease*

On September 15, Lars had his appointment with Dr. Knopman. He tested Lars and talked to him first, then he talked to me. The report was not good. He gave him the same kind of tests that he had done the two years before, and found that he could not answer as well, and had much more difficulty in getting his words out. I had known during the last few months that he was not improving. There had been a decline in his ability to do various tasks, his memory problems had increased, and he often became confused, but I still hoped that somehow there would be some chance that he would get better once we got settled and he was not under stress anymore. So when Dr. Knopman told me that it appeared to be Alzheimer's Disease after all, it was a hard blow. As we walked to the car after leaving the clinic, Lars asked me what the doctor had said. I could not get myself to tell him. All I said was, "He was disappointed that you haven't improved as much as he had hoped, but you are to continue with the Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> injections."

From then on, whenever it was necessary to explain anything about his ill health, the Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> deficiency was described. I felt that with that he might at least retain some hope of getting better—and as a result, be happier. Another reason for my decision not to tell him was the fact that at that time they could not diagnose Alzheimer's Disease with certainty until an autopsy was performed after death. My sister, Dr. Doris, concurred with that opinion and when she saw him a couple of weeks later, she still thought that maybe his condition was due to stress. I wanted to believe that, and I thought that maybe it was too soon after we had gotten back and that he was still suffering from jetlag. When Lars had another appointment with Dr. Knopman six months later, I called the doctor first and told him that I had not told him of the diagnosis. His response was, "Oh, I don't tell my patients—unless it is necessary for financial planning, or other reasons." (Since then, Dr. Knopman has changed his view, and he now tells patients the diagnosis.)

After living in hope during the last few years that there would be another explanation for the problems that Lars had been having, the final diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease was devastating. Even though I had known that there was a strong possibility that this would be the diagnosis, I hadn't really given up. Now I had to face the fact that our retirement was not going to be what we had hoped and planned for. Lars had looked forward to doing many things that he had not had time for before, and the realization that this was not to be was painful. We were facing the *Loss of Dreams*<sup>1</sup> that Alzheimer families experience.

Up until now, I had been privileged to have an active part in the mission work in Japan, and I had hoped that I would be able to continue to be active in some form of ministry in this new phase of our lives. But now these prospects all faded and the realization that I

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1. *Loss of Dreams: A Special Kind of Grief* by Ted Bowman

would not be free to pursue many outside interests left me feeling rather sorry for myself. As I prayed for help to know what to do next, and for strength to face this situation, I was somehow directed to read Romans 12:6-8:

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

It was the mention of the last gift—that of “showing mercy” that showed me what my new calling was to be. I knew that the Lord was revealing to me that I was to be a “care-giver.” My calling now was to care for my husband. Even though this gift of showing mercy was the last in the list, it was by no means a lesser gift. It was just as important a gift as any of the others. The call that came to me at this time, was as clear as any of my previous “calls”—as teacher, as missionary, as wife and mother. And so I could only respond, “All right, Lord, if this is what you want me to do, I’ll do it, but You will have to give me the strength that I will need.” The Lord gave me peace as I prayed that prayer, and I was able to accept this call. I haven’t always fulfilled the last part of that verse—“with cheerfulness,” but knowing that the Lord had called me to this task has given me the strength to carry on.

The day after we received the diagnosis, our shipment from Japan was delivered and unloaded into the house we were in the process of buying. With the future so bleak, I wondered if we had done the right thing, but at this point, there was really no other alternative. If we had had the diagnosis before we had made the decision, I don’t know what we would have done—we probably would not have bought the house, but rather opted for an apartment. But a friend encouraged me by saying that even if we could live in the house for three years, it would probably be worth it. More than ten years later, we realize that it worked out for the best for us. Lars loved living in Forest Lake; he liked the house—and this was the last major decision that he helped make. Because we lived in a small town, he was able to go for walks by himself for five to six years. He had something to do—work in the yard, or in his shop. For the first two or three years, he could go swimming in the lake in the summer, and walk across it in the winter to go uptown.

We were very busy the next few weeks buying furniture, getting the kitchen remodeled, and getting ready to move in. That part of getting settled didn’t seem to bother Lars. If he didn’t feel up to going along, he would stay home, but that didn’t happen very often. He rather seemed to enjoy the shopping. Mike and Ruth came a couple of week-ends and helped us with the remodeling of the kitchen.

We also made a rather quick trip to North Dakota and Canada the middle of October. Since it was my 60th birthday that month, I thought it would be nice to have part of the celebration with my mother who had turned 90 in June. After a couple of days at Edmore, we drove to Swift Current—the first time that I drove the whole way—and rode to Edmonton and Grande Prairie with Mildred and Phil.

Mom had remained in a Swift Current nursing home after Dad died until the following spring of 1986. She made a trip to Alberta to visit the daughters who lived there. While visiting RoseAline and Vern, she became ill and after a hospital stay, entered the nursing home in Grande Prairie. Since Vern was the Chaplain there and RoseAline taught nursing in the adjacent hospital, it was an ideal place for Mom to be. While we were visiting, she was able to come to RoseAline and Vern’s house for a birthday party.

On our return trip, we stopped again at Edmore. We sorted through our belongings that had been stored in our house in Edmore and brought back as much as we could get in our car. We arrived back in St. Paul on October 21, and Leon had just received the

awaited phone call from Joel in Japan. Alec Milo had been born at Luttio's house (our former home). A midwife had delivered him and Ruth's mother had been the nurse. It was not an easy birth as he weighed over eleven pounds.

Since we had arrived in the USA, I had been doing all the driving as Lars easily got confused making the change to driving on the right side—and Dr. Knopman had said that he should not drive. Later he would occasionally drive to church in Forest Lake, and he would drive for an hour or so on the open freeway going to North Dakota, or to Ruth and Mike's in Wisconsin. On one such trip, when we were on our way home, we had stopped for coffee after he had driven for awhile, and when we went back to the car, he was confused as to which side to get in. He handed me the keys and said that I had better drive. For quite some time after he had quit driving, he would back the car out of the garage when we were going to go somewhere. One day, he ended up half-way on the lawn instead of the driveway, and he never tried it again. An acquaintance, who didn't know of his illness, asked once if he didn't drive. Lars replied, "She won't let me."

To which I quickly added, "When he retired, he retired completely!" This was his way of trying to cover up his inadequacies—by blaming me—and I was happy to help him do that.

The closing for the house was on October 30. After that was all taken care of, we concentrated on getting the furniture delivered, and unpacking all of our stuff from Japan. By November 18, we had enough done so that we could move in. Being able to live in the Mission Apartment while we got the house settled made the move so much easier. Alton and Toodie Knutson helped us a great deal, also. Arnold and Frank loaded their trucks and brought the rest of our things from the Edmore house—for the first time, we had all our belongings in the same place. It was a busy time as we sorted and shopped and arranged, and then shopped some more.

We took off a couple of days and drove to Stoughton for Thanksgiving with Ruth and Mike. By Christmas time, we were settled enough to welcome family and guests. JohnE came home after finishing his work on his doctorate at Columbia University. Faith and Eric drove from Massachusetts, and the Grubels drove from Stoughton. They came in their pick-ups so they took their *tansus* back with them—the *tansus* that Lars had refinished. We also had three Japanese guests, Hiroko Sasaki and Akiyo Tsuge who had been studying English on the west coast, and Miho Hotta, our neighbor from Toyota. We had beds for them all. It was wonderful to be in our own home.

All the work of getting settled, and having people come and go, didn't seem to bother Lars too much. The fact that he was able to help made a difference. He was still able to walk uptown and do small errands by himself. When the snow came, he could shovel the driveway and the sidewalks. We gradually settled into a routine that was quite free of stress. We went in to the Cities quite often, and he seemed to enjoy going places. We were "church tramps" for the first couple of years. We still had our membership at St. Anthony Park Lutheran, and we went there quite often. We both liked that church where we still had some friends. It seemed to be especially good for Lars as he always had old friends and former teachers like Dr. Burgess, Dr. Rogness, and others who would greet him and make him feel at home. The half hour drive to church was not difficult. We also attended Hosanna Church, a smaller church east of Forest Lake. At first we liked it because of its size, but since it was a church with many young families, at this point in our lives it didn't really meet our needs. We were attending Faith Lutheran more and more, but sometimes the large number of people was hard for Lars to take. As time went on, he began to feel more comfortable at Faith, and after living in Forest Lake for more than three years, we decided it was better to be members at Faith and visitors at St. Anthony Park rather than the other way around. We still went to St. Anthony Park occasionally.

Lars' ability to express himself had been gradually getting worse, but until the spring of 1986, his letters to his siblings (the Ingulsrud Round Robin) were quite normal. However, his letters of September, December, and into 1987 showed that he was having more and more difficulty saying what he wanted—and also knowing what to write about. He made more and more mistakes in choice of words, and then in actually writing the words. His letters had many words stricken out, and then a new attempt to write it correctly. After we arrived back in the USA, his writing slipped even more, and he wrote only with a great deal of difficulty, and it was often hardly legible. By January of 1988, his contribution to the Round Robin started out with "My secretary is going to type this so that you can read it, so I'm dictating." Not only did his secretary type his letter, she also had to help him form the sentences, and sometimes coach him as to what to write. From the summer of 1988, I wrote the letters for him.

Even signing his name became quite a challenge—and almost unreadable. One time, he was struggling to write his name and became so frustrated and looked up in despair, "What's wrong with me?"

At times like that, I felt guilty not telling him, but I always fell back on the Vitamin B<sup>12</sup> explanation. I don't think it would have helped him to tell him more. Several times when we met people who asked about his health, he would try to explain it, and then turn to me and say, "You tell them what's wrong with me."

Not telling him bothered me at times because I didn't like the idea of having a secret from him—we had always been open with each other, and I didn't like sharing something with others that I couldn't share with him. But I always asked myself, "What would help him to be happier?"—and I decided that was the most important. After some years, when he had become less aware of his condition, one day we were at the clinic for Lars' appointment and I asked Dr. Knopman if it would be all right to tell him now. His answer was: "No, even though he may not comprehend it, it could have enough emotional impact to do more harm than good."

In January, 1988, we attended the reunion of his Seminary class (35 years) during the Convocation. He was nervous as each one of the members gave a greeting and told what they had been doing. He was one of the last ones to be called on, and by that time, the tension had built up. He asked me to help him, so between the two of us, we explained his situation briefly. What would have been a very enjoyable evening for him turned out to be quite difficult. Again, an example of how inadequate he felt when he was with his peers.

On April 28, 1988, Lars had another appointment with Dr. Knopman. He thought that Lars had deteriorated some since his last visit, and said that the disease was progressing very slowly. He predicted that he could live eight to ten years more. Doris went with us that day, and she was with me when Dr. Knopman gave his evaluation. By now, it seems that she also had given up on the hope that it might be caused by stress. Even though I really didn't expect to hear any good news, I came away from that appointment feeling depressed, a feeling I often had after having family or relatives leave after a visit. Those were the times that I really felt alone—especially because I could not share my anxiety with Lars. His had always been a strong shoulder on which to cry.

We made a trip to Stoughton over Mother's Day week-end. As usual, we had an enjoyable visit except for one more distressing indication of Lars' worsening condition. Rick and Steve were playing ball with some of their friends on their large lot. We joined them for awhile, and Lars was going to take his turn at the bat. It was hopeless. He couldn't figure out where to stand, or how to swing the bat. He was aware enough of the problem to feel a bit embarrassed—and probably Rick and Steve were, too. They were very understanding and knew that Grandpa was ill, but it was unfortunate that an incident like that happened in front of their friends. Before we returned to Forest Lake,



we went with Ruth to her college at Whitewater. She showed us her office and Lars felt very proud of his daughter, Dr. Grubel.

We were busy that first spring and summer as we had a lot of yard work to do. It was very hot and dry the summer of 1988, but we were able to get the yard in fairly good shape. Lars was able to help, and usually did the mowing. I learned that I had to be close by to see that he did it all. He was having difficulty seeing what needed to be mowed. When we had problems with the mower, he wasn't able to fix it—not even to change oil. He had lost his mechanical skills. He also lacked judgment in things like tree-trimming and one day cut several branches off a tree that weren't supposed to be cut. In the house, he continued doing the vacuuming. He also worked on refinishing one *tansu* that he hadn't had time to do in Sendai. We often went swimming in the lake near our house which was great during the heat spell. He still enjoyed reading, but it took him a lot longer to read anything. After a couple of years, he gradually lost these skills, too, so books or magazines were no longer enjoyed. He lost the ability to handle the mower, and when he vacuumed the carpet, he would go over and over one area and not move on to do the whole floor.

During that first year, we started getting information on Long Term care. We found out that without the specific Long Term Care Insurance, we would be on our own if we would ever need nursing home care. We did apply for that insurance for Lars, but he was turned down because of his "pre-existent condition." We checked with several companies and the answer was always the same.

We traveled over 5000 miles that first summer of 1988. Before starting our traveling, we enjoyed an inspirational conference for retired pastors and spouses—they used the word "redirected" rather than "retired." At this time, Lars was still able to enjoy those meetings—the lectures and the visiting with other participants. Three to four years later, those gatherings became quite stressful for him.

The 1988 Ingulsrud family reunion was held near Rapid City, South Dakota in early July. We drove, stopping off one night with friends in southern Minnesota. I had waited until after the April appointment with Dr. Knopman to tell Lars' family of the diagnosis. Early in June, I wrote a family letter to them, telling them what Dr. Knopman had said so that they would be prepared to see the change in him. I asked them to treat him the same as they always had, that he had not lost his sense of humor, and could still be witty. He had always enjoyed being with his family, and this reunion was no exception. He didn't join in every activity, and sometimes needed time by himself. On our trip home, we drove through the Badlands National Park. We enjoyed these long car trips, stopping every 100 miles or so for meals or snacks.

The day after we returned from that trip, Ruth and Mike and boys came for a few days. It seems that during those first two to three years, whenever they came, we had some job for Mike to do in the house. This time they took care of everything at the house while I went to our first Gjabmarfel (Japan single lady missionaries) reunion at the ARC, a retreat center near Cambridge, Minnesota. I was gone for two nights and came back in time to welcome JohnE and Kate who spent a few days with us. Early in May that year, JohnE had surprised us with the announcement of his engagement to Kate Allen of Zimbabwe whom he had met while at Columbia University. After JohnE made a trip to Zimbabwe to meet Kate's family, he and Kate visited us. We were happy for this opportunity to meet our future daughter-in-law. They left again in the middle of July—JohnE to go back to China (where he had been since the first of the year), and Kate to Zimbabwe.

A couple days later, Hal and Dalene Eimon came and after an over-night visit, drove with us to Luther College in Decorah, Iowa for the annual Mission Retreat. This was the last retreat for us, and we were in the group of the retiring missionaries that they

recognized at the banquet on the evening of July 19. I had been commissioned on July 18—thirty four years earlier. Doug Swendseid gave the speech, and we were presented with a plaque recognizing our 35 years of service. By this time, most of the other missionaries there knew that Lars was not well. We stayed in a dormitory and sometimes Lars would get confused in the hallways and bathrooms, so I had to stay with him in order to direct him. Again I noticed that being with colleagues put him under more stress.

We were only home long enough to do laundry and pack and we were off again on a trip to North Dakota and Canada. We were at Edmore only two days. While we were staying at Frank and Mary's, Lars had gone out and tried to help Frank with some of the farm work—involving some machinery. He couldn't handle it, and when he came in, he was feeling very low and said to me, "I can't even help my brother."

We rode with Jim and Helen and Inez to Canada, going through Glacier, Banff and Jasper parks. Lars had always enjoyed these places when we had traveled before, but he was less enthusiastic this time. Maybe he had just seen too much. On this trip, we went to Grande Prairie where the Nelson family reunion was held. Doris had brought Mom from the Nursing Home and she was with us for part of the reunion—her last family reunion.

After so much traveling and being with people all summer, Lars was beginning to appear tired. We arrived home on August 7. Three days later, we had guests from Toyota, Japan. The Naruses and another couple stayed with us for two nights, and three others stayed at Knutson's. A couple weeks later, two of the Suzuki girls from Mikkabi visited us for an overnight stay. The visits didn't seem to be too difficult for Lars, though he did have problems communicating, especially in Japanese. He showed less pleasure over their visits than he would have under ordinary circumstances.

## 45. *Living with Alzheimer's*

**T**he first year in our new home had been filled with many activities: the moving and settling, various repair and renovation jobs, the problem with water in the basement, yard work, visits from family members, summer travel and reunions, visits from Japanese friends and others. We could hardly say that our nest had been empty as we had received so many guests. I suppose that it was all very helpful in our adjusting to living with Alzheimer's Disease as we were kept so busy. At times, Lars showed the strain, but he still had things he could do himself, which helped to give him a feeling of being useful. Having to hire someone to do repair jobs on the house could have been a source of real frustration for him, but he seemed to accept it. Whenever Mike worked on any jobs, he always had Lars help him and that always reassured him. I tried to include him in any decision we had to make about the house or yard or car—and in many cases, he was able to make a reasonable contribution. Most of the time he was more comfortable with letting me go ahead and make the decision.

In September of 1988, our so-called "empty nest" filled up again when Joel and Ruth came back from Japan. They couldn't get into University housing right away, so lived in our upstairs apartment for about seven weeks. It was great having our youngest grandson, Alec close enough to enjoy him everyday. Since Ruth was studying at the University of Minnesota, we had many chances to baby-sit.

We also had a renter for one of the basement rooms for three months. Nom'Paul Yoshitomi, son of Froydis and Sakae, came from Japan to study at the University of Minnesota. When winter came, he found an apartment closer to the university. Since he was a good friend of Joel and Leon, it was a pleasure to have him with us.

There were times when Lars' memory loss and confusion became quite evident. We had continued going to St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church quite frequently, but one Sunday, we decided to go to the 9:00 a.m. service at Faith—at least I thought that "we" had made the decision. When we got to the church, we heard that there was a missionary couple from Tanzania speaking that day—the wife at the Adult Forum, and the husband at the service. So we went to the Adult Forum, and I had thought that we would then go to the 10:30 service. Lars got very upset when he found that we were not going to St. Anthony Park, and I realized that it would not work to try to persuade him differently. We quickly left and drove to St. Anthony Park in time for the 11 a.m. service. By then, I was the one who was upset and had a hard time concentrating on the worship. Afterwards, I realized that I had made the decision to go to Faith too hastily, and we had to rush more than usual to get there on time, so he had not been able to keep up. After that, I tried to make the decision the night before as to which church we would go to, and then in the morning, make sure that it was what he wanted to do. We gradually started going to Faith a little more often and before long, Lars said that he thought we should join. However, I wanted to be sure that that's what he wanted—and there were times when he was less certain—so we continued alternating between the two churches and

finally in December of 1991 we had our membership transferred. As he got to recognize more and more people, and they were very friendly to him, he felt comfortable at Faith and often said, "I like this church."

Our lives now had settled into somewhat of a pattern. We found that retired life could also be very busy. Keeping up our house and yard kept us busy from spring to fall and we found it to be good therapy for both of us. We were involved with various meetings at church, went to special events at the Seminary, or retired clergy and missionary activities. Since there were so many former Japan missionaries in the Twin Cities area, we often met these friends at various gatherings. As time went on, being in crowds became more and more difficult for Lars, especially when a lot of people would talk to him and he was uneasy in his attempts to respond.

We still had company frequently—our own children came home periodically, and other relatives and friends came for shorter or longer visits. It was at those times that we were very thankful for the upstairs apartment. Our guests could stay upstairs, and Lars felt less confused having our own space to ourselves. He couldn't take a lot of noise or too many people around for a long a period of time.

We had always loved having our grandchildren come, and Lars enjoyed doing things with them. When Alec and Laura were very small, he didn't seem to mind when they cried. It made him especially happy when Alec would work with him in the yard, or when Laura preferred him to Grandma, but it gradually became harder for him to have any extra commotion. It bothered him if they left toys on the floor, or if they had the TV on too loud—or when they just acted like normal children. When Joel and Ruth lived with us, he enjoyed Alec, but if he got too active in the evenings, Ruth would have to take him upstairs. Evenings were especially difficult. But after Joel and Ruth moved to St. Paul, if we hadn't seen them for a few days, Lars would say, "We haven't seen our little boy for awhile"—and then we would make some excuse to go in and baby-sit or take him with us somewhere. If Alec did something that Lars thought he shouldn't do, he would try to discipline him. Sometimes this meant striking out at him. I had to watch this very carefully, because I didn't want Alec to become afraid of him, or to remember his Grandpa in this way. Alec was very fond of Grandpa, and felt bad when there was such an incident. On one such day Alec was having lunch with us and he wasn't eating his food. Grandpa just tapped him lightly on his head and told him to eat. Alec took the tap quite seriously, and soon I saw a very sad look on his face and he said, "I think I'll go outside and sing a sad song!"

When I saw instances when Lars was not able to enjoy his grandchildren, it made me feel like "singing a sad song." There were many times that the tears flowed, but I didn't want to let him see me crying. There were times when I would isolate myself in the bathroom. This cruel disease was gradually taking so much away from him, and from all of us, his family.

As time went on, there was less and less that Lars could do without my help. He had one activity that he did by himself for a long time, and that was his morning walk. He had his own route that he took, and he would be gone for about forty minutes. I felt that as long as he could handle that by himself, it gave him some feeling of independence and accomplishment. When we had overnight guests, one of them would often walk with him, but he always led the way. I went with him once just to see where he went. He gradually shortened that walk, probably because he was becoming a little uncertain of finding his way back. I didn't worry about him because he had always seemed to know his limitations and would go only as far as he felt confident. He wasn't a "wanderer" as some Alzheimer patients become. However, in the spring of 1992, he decided that he wasn't going to go for his walks anymore. He had come back from his walk one morning

completely exhausted—he had probably become confused and thought that he was lost for awhile.

After seeing an exercise bike at niece Becky's house, Lars decided he wanted one. Frank offered to let us use one they had, but he insisted that he wanted his own, so we did buy one and he exercised on it for some time, but after awhile that, too, became too strenuous for him.

There was one instance when he did become lost. It was in the summer of 1993. Ruth and Alec and Laura were visiting, and one evening we walked up to Alma's house—a block and a half away. Lars didn't want to go in, and since we were only going to be there for a few minutes, he was to wait outside. I kept checking on him and saw him walking back and forth in her yard. The few minutes got to be a little longer than planned, and when we left, Lars was nowhere in sight. I thought that he had gone on ahead of us, so we walked home. Just as we got to our house, a police car came—with Lars in it. The policeman told me that he had gone into the house next door to Alma's and announced, "I'm home!" Since the people didn't know him, they called the police. He was carrying his wallet, so they found his name and address. The policeman asked me if he had Alzheimer's, and when I said, "Yes," he told me that his mother also had it, so he understood. He took down our phone number in case it should ever happen again. Lars didn't appear to be upset by the incident—he came out of the car smiling.

There were other instances of him wandering away, but again he never seemed to be lost. One of those times, he had walked down toward the lake and it started to rain very hard. Some neighbors, who knew about his condition, saw him and invited him to stand in the doorway of their garage to be out of the rain. When they called and told me, I took an umbrella and went over and brought him home. Another time, when I had been busy in the house and hadn't checked on him for a short time, he had walked out of the yard. I couldn't find him right away, and asked a couple of the neighbors to help me look for him. I found him in the next-door neighbor's yard. I hadn't seen him right away as he had been behind their garage, on his way back from his walk. He didn't seem at all concerned, and acted like he knew where he was.

When we were traveling in Eastern Canada and Vermont with Doris in the fall of 1992, we had a bit of a scare again when Lars decided to take a walk one morning. We were staying in a motel, so no one in the area knew us. We noticed that he was gone and after a few frantic moments, found him not too far away. Our fears may have been unfounded, as again it seemed that he knew his limits and wouldn't go farther than he could handle himself. But I never knew when he might become more confused and he could never have explained to anyone where he belonged.

We did a lot of traveling the first few years of our retirement. Lars enjoyed it—at first anyway—and I wanted to do as much as possible while he was still able. Our first big trip was to Zimbabwe for JohnE and Kate's wedding in February, 1989. Alton and Toodie Knutson also went—I wouldn't have had the courage to go by ourselves. Lars took the trip very well and enjoyed it most of the time. He especially enjoyed the safari at the Hwange Game Park. The elephants fascinated him. Victoria Falls was also a great experience.

We enjoyed the hospitality of the Allen's before and after the wedding and had a wonderful time. The wedding was in the University chapel and the reception was in the yard of Allen's home. In spite of it being a rainy day, the wedding and reception were lovely, and we were so happy to be there. The following week, we joined the newly married couple and Kate's family at a resort area for a "family honeymoon." JohnE and Kate decided that they wanted to spend as much time as possible with family members—they knew they'd have lots of time by themselves after they left for China.

Doris and her friend had also come from Canada for the wedding, so after our time in Zimbabwe, the four of us went to South Africa for a couple of weeks. We flew to Johannesburg and rented a car for the rest of the trip. We were able to visit the places where Doris had worked as a missionary nurse years before. That, too was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Towards the end of that trip, Lars was beginning to get tired and as so often happened when we were away from home, he wanted to go home—right now! That afternoon, I was able to get him to lie down and take a nap, and when he woke up, he was fine again. We flew back to London and met the Knutsons there (they had traveled to other parts of Africa), then back to Forest Lake. I was so thankful that we had been able to go and that the whole trip had been so marvelous. I believe Lars felt that way, too.

We made a rather quick trip to Canada in April for Mom's funeral. Joel went with us, and he did all of the driving. Mom died on April 12, 1989, in Grande Prairie, Alberta at the age of 91. At her funeral in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, six of her daughters were pallbearers. She had carried each of us before we were born and lovingly cared for us, so it seemed very appropriate that we could carry her to her final resting place. The three oldest siblings preceded the casket out of the church. Again it was good to be together as a family and this time it was with the realization that we—as well as Lars and his siblings—were now the older generation.

The next big trip we took was to Japan in August of 1990. I had decided that if we were both going to go, it would have to be that summer. Dr. Knopman said that he could see no reason why Lars shouldn't go, so I invited our neighbor, Alma Kauls to accompany us. She was thrilled to do so and was a great help while traveling. She could stay with Lars when I had to check on tickets or baggage. It would have been very difficult without her. We spent almost three weeks at our cabin at Lake Nojiri. Since it had been three years since we had attended the annual meeting, we needed to put in an appearance, and we started the procedure of transferring the cabin and lot to JohnE and Kate. We did a lot swimming and walking and visiting with old friends. Alma thoroughly enjoyed the place and it felt so natural for us to be back, although Lars could do even less of the activities that he had always enjoyed during our early Nojiri summers.

When we left Nojiri, we traveled by train to Sendai and visited the Tsurugaya Church and the Sugiyamas, then traveled to Tokyo, Numazu, Toyota, Kyoto, Mikkabi, and Hamamatsu. Those two weeks were quite tiring for Lars. He remembered a lot of the people we met but having so many friends talk to him and not being able to respond got to be very stressful. When we spent a couple of days with the Nakashimas in Hamamatsu, Lars had another of his, "I want to go home—right now" attacks. He was feeling very tired at that point, and I explained to him that we couldn't go that day because we didn't have a ticket until Wednesday. Also we were going to see Leon in Tokyo on Tuesday. I got him to rest a little while, then had to talk him into watching the *sumo* tournament on TV with Nakashima Sensei. He had always enjoyed *sumo*, and after a few minutes of watching it again, he forgot about going home, enjoyed the *sumo*, and the rest of our stay there. We went to Tokyo the next day, met Leon for dinner, stayed with missionary friends over-night, then flew home on a direct flight from Tokyo to Minneapolis. After that long flight, Lars said that he was never again going on a trip like that. But after he got rested up, he never mentioned it again and remarked only about the things he had enjoyed. JohnE had wanted us to include China in that trip, but that would have been too much for Lars—even though he had enjoyed China very much on our previous visit.

Shorter trips included going to California to visit Joel and Ruth after Laura Grace was born on June 4, 1991. She was our first grand-daughter. We also spent Thanksgiving with them in 1991 and 1993. In the fall of 1992, we flew to Montreal, my sister Doris met us

there and we drove with her in a rented car to visit Faith and Eric in Vermont. We also went to see Leon in Saratoga, New York, then traveled up to Ontario enjoying the fall scenery before we flew home from Toronto.

In May 1991, we went to North Dakota to attend the funeral of John Froyland, Lars' last remaining uncle. In September, we drove to Saskatchewan for the funeral of my last remaining uncle, Walberg Nelson. After that funeral, I was visiting with many cousins and friends. When Lars became very restless, I took him out to the car and thought it would be good for him to rest there away from all the people and commotion. When I came out to the car later, he was very agitated. He may have become afraid after waking from a nap and not knowing where he was.

It was getting more and more tiring for Lars to take these trips—he had reached the stage where the familiarity of home was more and more important to him. On the plane coming back from California after Thanksgiving in 1993, Lars got very tense and it was difficult to get him to settle down. I decided then that this would have to be the last big trip that we would take. However, Leon was going to be in a play in Springfield, Massachusetts just before Christmas. He had left SCOT (the Performing Arts group in Japan) and was going back to school the following year. We had never seen him perform and realized that if we didn't go to this play, we didn't know when the next opportunity would come. After deciding that Lars should not take any more trips, I thought that I would go by myself and have him stay in Respite Care. I called to make the reservation at the Parmlly Nursing Home where he had stayed before but was told that there was no room available. I was very disappointed, thinking that I would have to give up on the trip. I couldn't get over the disappointment, so I decided that we would both go. We made our plane reservations, and on December 20, flew to Burlington, Vermont where Faith met us. We stayed at Faith and Eric's that night and the next day rode with them to Springfield. Leon did well in the play and even though Lars probably didn't understand much of the play, he knew it was Leon—and enjoyed the whole thing. Afterwards when we were talking to Leon and the other actors in the lobby, Lars seemed overwhelmed with emotion and his eyes filled with tears. I was so thankful that I had not come without him. The whole trip went very well. Lars even enjoyed the two hour stop-overs in the Boston airport as we were able to eat there. The restroom problems that I had worried about were also resolved when a clerk at one of the desks offered to stand guard while we used the handicapped facilities in the women's restroom.

During this period, our life continued to be quite peaceful. When we were at home, Lars was usually quite relaxed and seemed fairly happy. He felt comfortable at Faith church and the pastors and several of the members there were very kind to him and made him feel at home. Our social life was becoming less active as time went on. Being in a larger group where there was a lot of conversation became more and more stressful for Lars. When we had guests come to our home, if it got too frustrating for him when he could not participate in the conversation, he would go out to the garage. That became his place of refuge—he would often just stand in the doorway and look out.

Listening to music was becoming increasingly beneficial for Lars. He was watching less and less television, but would sit for long periods listening to music. Familiar hymns, gospel songs, music with a good rhythmic beat, quiet classical music, old style western music—all of these were very soothing to him. I found some CD's of classical music recorded with a background of the sound of ocean waves, and he would relax completely as he listened. When he listened to music that had good rhythm, he would clap his hands to the music. Often, when we had guests for a meal, I would put some music on the stereo—as we had done in the past. I had to discontinue that practice, however, because when Lars heard the music, he would insist that we stop talking. So it was either the music or conversation—we couldn't have both. Later when I read an article about the

benefits of Music Therapy for people suffering with Alzheimer's Disease, I understood that I wasn't the first to discover what a calming effect music can have, and how wonderfully music speaks to the soul.

A very touching incident occurred one day that illustrated the truth of that concept. We were driving to Stoughton, Wisconsin to visit Ruth and Mike, and as usual, I tried to find music on the radio that would help Lars to relax and enjoy the trip. A song was being played—one that was not familiar to us, but he seemed to be listening. The singer kept repeating the lines, "You don't know it, but you are so beautiful..." Lars reached over, and with a twinkle in his eyes, patted my arm and said, "That's you!"

He could never have expressed that sentiment any other way except through the music. It made me both laugh and cry. I remembered how he had always been so generous with his compliments. It had been a long time since he had been able to express his feelings in words, but those two words that he spoke that day will always be treasured.

By December 1992, Lars' confusion was becoming more and more noticeable. He would have difficulty getting in and out of the car. He became confused trying to follow directions. One day after he had gotten out of the car, I asked him to close the door. He tried to figure out what he was to do and ended up getting back into the car. There were less and less things that he could do on his own, and sometimes seemed bored. He would stand and watch me as I worked in the yard, or did other jobs. I couldn't help but wonder how he felt inside when he was unable to help me. He became uneasy if I left him alone for any length of time. If I was working in the yard and he was in the house, I would have to come in periodically to check on him and let him know where I was. He became almost frantic one afternoon when I was outside longer than usual, and he couldn't find me. I had been at the back of the house and when I came around to where he saw me, his distressed look and his sad complaint, "Where were you?" made me realize that this disease was making this man like a child again.

To satisfy the needs that I believed both of us were feeling, I came to the conclusion that I should have Lars go to an Adult Day Care facility. He was increasingly becoming my "shadow" and that was beginning to wear on me emotionally. When I was working in the kitchen, he would come and stand in the middle of the kitchen and watch me, or sometimes sit on a chair. When I was talking on the telephone, he would stand near by and listen. I realized that he was probably getting bored with the narrow scope of activities in which he could participate. I could take him with me on some errands, but that was becoming more and more difficult, too. Sometimes it worked to have friends stay with him so that I could be away for awhile, but there were times when he became quite resentful when I left him in someone else's care.

For some months in early 1992, I had not been feeling very well. I had been having symptoms off and on of some stomach ailment. The symptoms were so vague and hard to describe, but the doctor thought it sounded like it could be ulcers. I'd be on medication for awhile, then feel all right and forget about it. Then the symptoms would recur, and I'd go back to the doctor. Finally in the spring, he sent me for a gastroscopy, and the diagnosis was that I had a very bad ulcer. That meant more medication and after taking the medicine for three weeks I thought it had been very effective. But when I had another gastroscopy, the doctor didn't like what he saw. He had also done a biopsy to check for cancer, and the results of that were negative. I was very relieved, so wasn't even concerned when the doctors recommended surgery. On June 4, I had the surgery and a few hours later as I was regaining consciousness, I heard the surgeon say, "It's all over. It was cancer, but we got it all."

I was in the hospital for a week, and then spent two or three weeks recuperating. During that time, my sister Doris stayed with Lars, and had help from my brother, Jim



and Helen. Faith also spent a week helping during my recuperation, and the Vorlands stayed one week-end. Lars responded very well to others caring for him during the time that I was unable to do it. He had also shown real concern about my condition and seemed to be somewhat aware of the situation. It helped that the hospital was close enough to our home so that Doris could bring Lars over to see me each day. I was overwhelmed by the love and kindness shown to me by family and friends during the time that I had to be cared for instead of being the care-giver. I thanked the Lord for healing me through the surgery, and for providing for our needs through the period of my illness. By autumn that year, I had made a good recovery, and we were able to enjoy the trip out east when we went with Doris to Montreal and Vermont.



## 46. *Sharing the Caregiving*

Since there were still many things that we could enjoy together, it was not an easy decision to have him go to an Adult Day Care facility. I resisted even the thought of it for some time. Having him go to Adult Day Care was another indication of what we were losing—his losses were also my losses. We were suffering these losses differently, but they were very real.

I had noticed that I became less patient with him whenever it became apparent that he was losing one more thing he could do by himself. As he gradually lost his ability to dress himself, it would take some time before I was willing to accept the fact that he could not do certain things. I suppose I was trying to deny it. Little by little, the things he could no longer do became evident: he couldn't put an undershirt over his head, or take it off; he couldn't find the sleeves for his shirt, or jacket; sometimes he'd put on two shirts, or two pairs of trousers, then he couldn't step into his trousers without help. While he could still button his shirt, I would leave him to do it by himself and I could make the bed in the time that it took him to accomplish this small task. Finally, the last thing he could do by himself was put on his socks, but only after I had started the socks over his toes. He was having increasing difficulty in feeding himself, also. It seemed he was unable to see an object right in front of him. He would reach with his fork or spoon beyond the plate where the food was. There were other times when he could not see things that were very obvious—even a chair in his path. But he would see the smallest scrap of paper or other small articles on the carpet, or leaves on the lawn, and would pick them up.

In December 1992, I decided to try having him go to the Adult Day Care program at the Parmly Nursing Home at Chisago City. I explained to him that they had a special program for seniors with memory and communication problems, and that this was something that he could go to by himself and leave me at home instead of the other way around. We decided to try it for only a half a day once a week so that he could get used to it gradually. After dropping him off the first Tuesday, in spite of the fact that I felt a real sense of relief, the tears flowed freely as I drove home. When I picked him up after lunch that day, he was very positive about the experience and had enjoyed the singing, the exercises, listening to music, and the meal. The following week, he stayed until 2:30 in the afternoon, but came home very unhappy. He was very negative about everything. He couldn't specify what was wrong, but only said that this was not where he wanted to be. I decided to try it again that same week on Thursday, and when I mentioned it at breakfast time, he seemed agreeable. On the way to Parmly, he asked where we were going and when I told him, he said, "Oh, no!" He had left his cap there the previous day, so I suggested that he needed to get that, and also the people were expecting him. He agreed, and when I left him with the staff, he was pleasant again. Since his close friend, Russ Sanoden often came out and took him for a ride, he went to pick him up that day. Again he made it very clear that he didn't like it at all! I was concerned that this plan

wasn't going to work, but the Day Care Director encouraged me not to give up as it usually takes a few times for the person to adjust to the program.

Later that month, we had our regular six-month appointment with Dr. Knopman and he encouraged Lars to continue in the Day Care program. (I continued to call it the "Senior Program.") On the way home when I told Lars that the doctor had said that he should continue, his response was, "Did he say that?"

With that, his attitude seemed to change, and the following week when it was time for him to go, I reminded him of the doctor's advice and he went willingly. He came home in the afternoon with a very positive report, saying that he had had such a good time. When I asked him if he got tired, his answer was, "No, those people there are so nice." The next week, he started coming home on the van that took participants to and from Parmly, another change that he adjusted to very quickly. Again I asked him if he had gotten tired, and his response was the same: "No,—those people, they do it all so well. You should go sometime."

I felt that if he enjoyed it enough to want to share it with me, I needn't worry about him anymore.

We had often enjoyed attending the annual Convocation at Luther Seminary, but since being in crowds was becoming increasingly difficult for Lars, I wasn't sure about trying it in January 1993. But Lars seemed to want to go, and it turned out to be a good experience for both of us. Phil and Margaret Luttio were visiting from California and spent a night at our house and went with us to the Convocation. Since it was the 40 year reunion of Lars' seminary class, he met a lot of old friends. In spite of the crowds, he seemed to enjoy it. A special blessing of that day came to us through one of the professors, Dr. Jim Nestingen. He came over to us at the end of one of the sessions, shook Lars' hand and with a great deal of compassion in his voice said, "May God's grace be with you in a special way at this time of your life," and then added similar words as he shook my hand. Only people who have been in our particular circumstance can understand what a comfort those words were to our spirits that day. Later on in the evening, we attended the reunion dinner with his former class members. Five years before, this had been a very stressful occasion, but this time, when I sent in our reservation, I had asked that they not call on Lars for a greeting and explained the reason. Again our good friend Russ came to our aid, and when he gave his greeting, he also introduced Lars and gave a summary of his life and service during the previous forty years. There were several close friends at that reunion—friends that he often had talked about, and I couldn't help but think what fun they would have had reminiscing if they could have communicated. But it was interesting to note that Lars didn't seem to fret about that anymore. Perhaps it was because the disease had progressed to the point where he no longer had the awareness of how much he had lost. Instead, when we came home that evening, he commented, "We had a lot of good things today!"

We spent about three weeks on a trip to Arizona in January-February 1993. We drove our car to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, met Lars' brother, Arnold there and drove the rest of the way with him. It was a long trip and Lars did get tired of the traveling, but we made interesting stops along the way. He enjoyed the visits with his brothers and sisters who spend the winters in Mesa, three of them living there permanently. As always when we had taken long trips, he did have one attack of "I want to go home—right now." This happened one evening after we had all been together at George and Shirley's house. Perhaps all the conversation, in which he could not take part, tired him and frustrated him. By the time we got back to the apartment, he was very upset. After I got him to our room, he sat down on the bed and cried. Was he crying because he missed the good times he had enjoyed with his family? What was going on in his mind to bring on this grief? It seemed that the crying released the tension, and he soon went to sleep. The next day, he

was fine again, and continued enjoying the rest of our stay there. On our return trip, he enjoyed the variety of scenery as we drove, and didn't seem to get too tired. He was very happy to get home again.

There was some change in his attitude after that time in Arizona. He seemed to be more bored when he was at home. He was no longer content to just sit and look out our bay-window which he had done until this time. He was quite willing to go back to the Day Care. He didn't remember it until we drove up to Parmly, and when he went in, he seemed to fit in right away. He was usually very positive about his days there and enjoyed the activities. As one of their special programs, an old-time band had entertained them one day, and as he responded so well to the music, one of the ladies in the band grabbed him and started dancing with him. He came home so excited that day and told me that he had had such a good time. He proceeded to try to tell me about it, and had to do it by action as he couldn't get the words out. When I asked him if they had been dancing, he answered with an enthusiastic "Yes!" I learned later that "Dance Therapy" is also very effective in treating people with dementia. I could easily understand that concept after seeing how Lars (who had not been a dancer) responded to it.



At this point, he was going to the Day Care only two days a week. There were mornings when he wasn't sure that he wanted to go, and I would explain again that his doctor thought he should continue. He also wondered why I didn't go with him, so I explained that this was his program to go to by himself, and I had my programs that I went to without him. Since he always rode on the van, he would be picked up at 8:15 in the morning and get home at about 3:30. I appreciated having that free time for my own activities. Later, we increased his days at the Day Care to four each week. The days that he didn't go, he seemed restless. When spring came, he still tried to help when I worked in the yard, but there was very little that he could do. He would pick up leaves and trash, but usually didn't know what to do with them. When he picked up any small branches or other sticks, he would break them into small pieces—an activity that kept him occupied for long periods. Then he dropped them on the ground again.

I was thankful for friends who helped with Lars' care. Russ faithfully came out almost every week and would spend time with Lars. Before his condition worsened, they would often go to a movie, or rent a video, but gradually Lars' attention span shortened to the point where he couldn't follow a story. Then Russ would usually take him for a walk, or for a ride in the country, and they would always end up at MacDonald's for ice-cream. (That was one of Lars' favorite things to do—whenever we were on a trip, he would always notice the "Golden Arches" and would insist on stopping.) When it became difficult for me to take Lars with me when I had shopping to do, he would stay at Vorland's while I shopped. The Knutsons and my neighbor, Alma Kauls, also helped with his care at times when I had to be away. More than once, I went to a reunion or a retreat and my brother Jim and Helen stayed with Lars. He was beginning to have times

when he became quite agitated and would strike out at me or at the workers at the Day Care. This would usually happen when he was tired, and at the Day Care they had difficulty in getting him to take an afternoon nap.

In August 1993, we had our first experience of using Respite Care. My sister-in-law, Miriam, had passed away in Kansas City and I went to the funeral. I was able to ride with a cousin but that meant being gone for two days. Lars went to Day Care as usual and then stayed over-night for two nights. I took him to Parmly in the morning as I needed to leave extra clothes for him. I explained to him that he would be staying over-night because I was going to Kansas City for two days. Again as I drove home, I wept as I realized that one more step had been taken in letting him go. I was gradually having to let others care for him, and suffering these losses was always painful—in spite of the sense of relief that I could leave knowing that he was well-cared for. It seemed that his stay had been without any problems, and when I asked him if he had had a good time, his answer was positive, and he added, “They’re good people.”

He was becoming more and more restless, and it was difficult to get him to rest in the afternoon, or to sit and listen to music for any length of time. It seemed that he was becoming more tense and sometimes that tension became too much to hold inside. One morning, as I was reading our morning devotions, he broke down and cried. He couldn’t tell me why he was crying, and again I wondered what was going on in his mind. After a couple of minutes, he recovered and was fine again.

By the fall of 1993, it seemed that we had adjusted fairly well to this new schedule. It was a real blessing for both of us. It seemed to be more comfortable for him to be with others at Day Care rather than to go with me to various activities. One evening, I had to attend a meeting where there were only women. It wasn’t a long meeting, so I took him with me. I realized afterwards that he had felt uncomfortable as he said to me on the way home, “I shouldn’t have come.” I was surprised that he had been aware of the situation to that extent, and had been able to express it.

Often Lars was uncomfortable when we had visitors—probably because it was so difficult for him to be a part of the conversation. But one evening in October 1993, it was a very different situation. I had invited the Ngede family to come for dinner. They were from Tanzania and while Pastor Ngede was studying at our seminary, his family had been able to come and live in Forest Lake. While we were still at the table after dinner, I asked the family to sing. They sang in Swahili in beautiful harmony, and Lars joined in with them. Even though it was not a familiar tune, he sang and even tried mouthing the words. He was beaming as he listened and sang with them. Pastor Ngede prayed quite a long prayer in Swahili, then told us what he had prayed. His prayer was especially for Lars: here was one who had been active in the Lord’s work, and now was unable to do anything, but in spite of going through this difficult time, he prayed that Lars would know that the Lord was with him and that someday his suffering would be over and he would have something so much better. It was a beautiful prayer, and it was even more beautiful to see how this African pastor ministered to a fellow pastor in such an extraordinary way.

That fall was when Lars was put on medication for the first time. Dr. Knopman had prescribed *Adavan* for him for times of anxiety. The first time I had given it to him was when we were visiting Ruth and Mike for a week-end. It seemed to make a real difference in making him more calm and helping him to enjoy activities. That particular day, Ruth had taken us to a tropical garden in Madison, and Lars thoroughly enjoyed it. I didn’t give it to him regularly at first—only as he seemed to need it. Those times became more frequent, so by February 1994, he needed it everyday.

Towards the end of February, we received a phone call from a friend in Japan telling us of the death of Nakashima Sensei. We knew that he had been very ill for some time,

so the news of his death did not come as a surprise. When I told Lars what the phone message had been, that his dear friend had died, he wept—not just a few tears, but almost sobbing. I knew that he understood. Since Leon was in Japan at that time, we asked him to go to the funeral and bring a greeting on our behalf.

Early in 1994, Lars was also beginning to have problems with taking care of his bathroom needs. The workers at Day Care had difficulty in getting him to go to the bathroom, and as a result, he had accidents occasionally. When he was unable to relieve himself, he would get frustrated and have outbursts of aggressive behavior. This happened at home one morning. It was one of the times when he could not relieve himself, and then couldn't find the door to get out of the bathroom. I was trying to turn him around, when all of a sudden, he pushed me and I fell backwards into the bath tub. Fortunately, I didn't get hurt, but it was such an emotional shock, especially when he didn't show any signs of remorse or concern for me. That morning, my crying spell lasted for a couple of hours, but by this time, it was not necessary to hide it from him. He hardly seemed to notice. A well-timed phone call from a friend gave me the opportunity to unload, and thus get through the day.

There were other times when he would strike out at me, or at the workers at the Day Care. I was learning to stay on the "escape" side—where I could get away, if necessary. At times when he raised his arm as if to strike me, I would say, "You're not going to hit me, are you?"

He would stop and say, "No" in a tone that suggested, "Whatever made you think that?"

After one of those instances, he went over and hit the chest of drawers—it seemed he had to hit something to relieve the frustration. This kind of behavior would have been much more devastating if I hadn't known that he was not responsible. This was not my loving husband who had always been so kind. I felt for women who are battered by husbands who do it intentionally.

At this time, he seemed to be "going down hill" rather quickly. My sister Doris visited us in March 1994 and noticed quite a difference from the previous summer. He had responded to her quite well on previous visits, but this time there was little or no response—as if he didn't remember her. He was getting the medication *Adavan* three times a day and it seemed to be effective as he showed less aggressive behavior. He started pacing more and couldn't sit still for very long. Exercising on the stationery bike became less and less, probably because he was becoming unable to motor-plan. He needed assistance with almost all activities of daily living: dressing, bathing, toileting, eating. Brushing his teeth became quite a challenge. He couldn't take his partials out by himself, so I had to help him. This was always more difficult at night when he was tired, so it worked better to do it in the morning. It was never easy though—as his doctor explained, "His private space is being invaded, and he might react quite aggressively." That happened one morning, and he lashed out at me. I was able to push him away, and get him out of the bathroom, but I lost my composure and shouted at him. After I had calmed down, I told him how sorry I was and he, too, seemed to feel bad about what had happened. As he became unable to take care of these tasks himself, at first he became quite upset with himself, but gradually he either accepted his losses, or became unaware of the situation. I feel that he must have been somewhat aware, however, because there were times when he seemed to feel very sad. How many were the times that I wished I could know what he was thinking and feeling! And how could I help him?

The workers at the Day Care were having more and more problems with Lars. He was getting more difficult to handle, pushing and striking out at the staff. There were many days that he came home with a note in his pocket. The director kept me informed of the difficulties that they were having. At home, too, when he was tired, or needed the

medication, he was very difficult at times. I was being trained in patience as I tried to take care of his daily needs—by now, I had to do almost everything for him.

The director of the Day Care hinted in early summer that if he continued being hard to handle, they might not be able to continue having him come. As they had others to care for, they weren't able to watch him constantly, and they couldn't take the chance of him hitting some of the other participants. The director told me that they would try to keep him through the summer. I realized then that I had to face the possibility of having him enter a nursing home quite soon. As long as he went to Day Care, I thought that I could handle the situation. But I didn't see how I could do it twenty-four hours a day. He was also getting very restless at night, and would get up three or four times each night. As the confusion progressed, I knew that I couldn't trust him to go to the bathroom by himself, so I always had to get up when he did.

Since he had been going to the Adult Day Care at the Parmly Nursing Home for over a year and a half, I had thought that when the time came for him to enter a home permanently, this would be the best place for him. He was acquainted there, and generally felt comfortable. It was only nine miles from our house, so it was very convenient in that way. However, since they did not have a special Alzheimer unit, the Day Care Director did not think it would be a wise choice. When he became agitated, he would strike out at others and could be a danger to other residents. She also felt that he needed to be in a place that would have less activity and be quieter. After getting her recommendation, I started looking at various nursing homes, specifically at homes that had Alzheimer units. That in itself was a very trying experience. Whenever I was shown around a facility, I would picture Lars being there, and it was almost more than I could handle.

There was something about each of these facilities that didn't quite fit—either the area for the Alzheimer residents was too small, and Lars liked to walk a lot, or the location wasn't satisfactory, or for other reasons, I could not feel that it was the right place for Lars. After one of these visits, I could hardly see to drive on the way home because of the tears, and I decided that my first choice for him would be Heaven! I felt certain that that would also be his first choice.

In July, 1994, I heard that Ebenezer Nursing Home in South Minneapolis was highly recommended for Alzheimer patients. At first it seemed a long way to travel, but I came to realize that it wasn't much different from some of the other places that I had looked at. Toodie Knutson went with me one day to look it over, and in spite of a building program going on, we were impressed. The rooms that we saw in the Alzheimer unit were quite large, and the hallways were wide. For the first time, I felt a little more at ease at the thought of having Lars enter a home. There was an empty room at that time as one resident had just recently passed away, but I was not ready to make that decision yet.

In August, I went to Camrose, Alberta for the Nelson family reunion. I went by plane so I was gone only a week. During that time, Lars was in Respite Care at Parmly. I thought this might be a good test to see how he would get along in a Nursing Home. Since Ruth, Alec and Laura were visiting in Minnesota at that time, they went to see him during that week, as did Alton and Toodie Knutson. Reports were that he seemed to be fine, but I noticed that he seemed a little more confused—probably due to the change in routine and different caregivers. The recommendation that he go to an Alzheimer unit still stood.

Since John and Kate were coming home from China the end of August, we planned a family reunion for Labor Day week-end. It worked out well for all of our children to be home at that time.

On August 22, I received a note (which had been a frequent occurrence for some time) from Kathy, the Day Care Director. She reported that they had had a particularly difficult



day with Lars. I called her then and asked her how long she thought they could care for him at Day Care. Her response was, "I'm trying to hold out until after Labor Day."

She knew of our plans for a family reunion. I realized that I needed to make some definite plans and called Ebenezer and asked when they would have an opening—perhaps towards the end of September. The nursing supervisor called later that day and did an assessment over the phone, to find out what level of care he would need. They called again the next day and said that they had an opening, and I could have until the following Monday to make the decision. That came as quite a shock. To make that decision so soon—a decision that I had been dreading for many months, and perhaps years. My first reaction was "I can't do it."

I had prayed for years that the Lord would give me the strength to care for Lars until He called him home. It seemed that my prayers were not being answered in the way that I had hoped, but that I was going to have to turn his care over to others.

It had been hard the first day that I took him to Day Care, and it was even harder the first time that I put him in Respite Care—but this! This was going to be so final. I fought it for two or three days, during which time I talked with most of our children by phone. They were ready to accept the decision and thought it was time. I also talked with Kathy at Day Care. She had always cared for Lars very lovingly and I knew that she had his best interests at heart. She felt that it was time to move on. I wanted to know what Dr. Knopman thought, so I also called him. His response was that he would have agreed six months earlier. Alton and Toodie Knutson had been close observers of our situation, and they, too, thought that this was a necessary move now. I hadn't planned to call my sister, Doris because I knew what she would say. She had thought that I should have taken the opening in July. However, without knowing about the decision I faced, she called me, and when I told her that I was to make this decision by Monday, her immediate response was, "Don't you think this is the Lord's leading?"

I guess I agreed with her as I had certainly been praying for His guidance, and now it seemed that there was no other alternative. Like so many other times in my life when I was faced with a big decision, it seemed that the decision was made for me, and I had only to concur. I called Ebenezer and said that I would admit him, but not until after Labor Day.

The reunion was wonderful. It had been the first time that we had all been together since Joel and Ruth's wedding in June 1986. Of course, there was a lot of talking and activity, and when it got too much for Lars, he would go out to the garage. He had been doing that so much in the last few weeks—stand in the doorway and look out. On Sunday morning, we all went to church together. I had been dreading this because in the last months, I sometimes had difficulty controlling my emotions in church. Certain hymns would cause the tears to flow. Lars had been able to continue to take part in the worship, singing the hymns, and responding with others in the liturgy. It seemed that going to church was very special for him, and I always tried to keep from thinking that this might soon have to end. Now I knew that this would be his last Sunday at Faith Lutheran, and I wondered how I could get through it. I made it a special prayer for some time before that Sunday that I would not lose control, but rather that it would be a very special time for the whole family as we worshiped and partook of the Lord's Supper together. The Lord answered that prayer, and we had a good worship experience as a family.

We had arranged for a photographer to come to the house and take family pictures which we did as soon as we came home from church. Sessions like that can sometimes turn out to be rather strenuous, but not this time. It all went very smoothly, and turned out to be another fun time. Everyone pitched in and helped with the family dinner after the pictures were all taken, and then we got ready to welcome relatives and friends who



BACK ROW: Eric, Kate, JohnE, Mike, Steve, Rick, Grace, Leon, Joel

FRONT ROW: Faith, Ruth, Lars, Alec, Ruth, Laura—Garden of our house at 607 S. Shore Drive,

came for our Open House at three o'clock. This was an opportunity for the children to visit with people that they wouldn't have a chance to see otherwise. The weather in the afternoon turned out to be cool and rainy so we weren't able to have the "garden party" that we had planned. As a result, it got a bit crowded in the house as we served the guests who came. That was the kind of situation that Lars could not handle for long, and when he started to get agitated, Russ Sanoden took him out for a drive. By the time they got back, there weren't as many people around and Lars had calmed down.

The following day, before everyone started dispersing for their various homes, most of us went together to Ebenezer to see where Lars would be going. When I had been there in July, I had seen only Luther Hall. Now they took us to Field Hall where Lars' room would be. This was a very old building, and very dreary—it was destined to be torn down as soon as the new wing was completed. Knowing that he would be in a nicer place in a short while was the only consolation that we had that day, but even with that, we all left feeling depressed. For the children, they were now facing the reality of their father going into a nursing home, and the fact that it was such a dreary place made it very difficult for them. Thankfully, the next time they visited him, he was in the new building which they all agreed was a lovely place.

Since JohnE and Kate had left their teaching positions in China, they were living in the Mission Apartments in St. Paul during their six-month terminal furlough. The timing of this situation was perfect for me as it meant that they were here to give support during

this difficult period. After the rest of the family had all left, we took Lars to Ebenezer. I had tried to prepare him for going but I didn't know how much he understood. I told him that Dr. Knopman thought that it would be best for him to go and stay at Ebenezer because they could take care of him and help him with his memory problems. He seemed to accept that—but again, how much did he comprehend? He had become very trusting of me as I was his main security and he accepted what I told him—which made it easy in one way, but very difficult in another. I was making a decision to take him away from his home—and he was trusting me.

JohnE and I took Lars to Ebenezer that Wednesday morning. The evening before and up to the time that we left was very wrenching. I more or less just went through the motions of getting his clothes ready, and preparing to leave. He sat in the front seat with JohnE, so he didn't see my tears as we drove away from the home that he had loved and shared with me for the last seven years. He was leaving more than this house—a life that we had happily shared for over thirty-three years. As we drove in to Minneapolis, he asked, "Where are we going?" This had become his usual question when we drove anywhere during the last couple of years. Again I explained to him as simply as I could. But I, too, wondered, "Where are we going?"

We took him to the room assigned to him and I unpacked his clothes. He seemed quiet, but I couldn't ascertain what he was feeling. JohnE and I ate lunch with him in the dining area, then spent another hour or so with him. Then came the most wrenching moment of all—saying good-bye to him and leaving him there. It was the most difficult thing I had ever done! I felt real physical pain in my whole body as we drove home that day, and emotionally drained. As so often happens, the Lord gives just the word we need at times like this, and the message I read in a devotional book that evening was: "When the Lord gives you a burden to bear, He also gives the strength to bear it."

I experienced the truth of that statement during those days, and continued to experience it as I adjusted to living alone. I did not miss the stress and difficulties of caring for him at home, but I did miss him very much.

Though JohnE and Kate had an apartment at the Mission Apartments, they stayed with me until the following Saturday which was a great help. JohnE and I went back the next day after taking Lars to Ebenezer, and when I walked up to him and greeted him, he looked at me and said, "Good-night!"—one of his more common expressions that could mean disgust or surprise or who knows? By this time, there weren't many expressions that he could speak, so the ones that he had retained, he used very often.

Another expression that he could still use was, "Let's go home." The first few times that I went to see him, I felt that he was trying to say it—but couldn't get the words out. Ordinarily, I would have helped him and given him the words, but I avoided doing that now. One day he did manage to say it, and I had to reply, "No, you can't go home today."

He seemed to accept my answer, but I'm sure the desire was there for some time before it, too, faded like so many other feelings that he had. The ability to express himself in any way was also gradually leaving him.

It didn't seem to take very long for him to adjust to the nurses and the aides who took care of him. The first evening after we had taken him there, I called the nurse and asked how he was doing. She had sung hymns to him as she got him ready for bed and he had settled down very quickly. When this nurse came into his room the next day when we were there, he smiled at her right away. I was relieved to see how comfortable he seemed to be with his new caregivers already.

It didn't always go that smoothly, however. Sometimes he became quite combative, and was difficult to handle. They consulted Dr. Knopman and he recommended the medication *Haldohl* besides the *Adavan* that he had been on. This quieted him down and he seemed much more relaxed, but after a short time on both those medications, he

seemed to become zombie-like. Eventually they were able to adjust the amounts to keep him on a more even keel.

I visited him three to four times a week and usually took him outside for a walk. Near the end of November, the new wing was completed so they moved all the residents into the west wing of Luther Hall. This was a great improvement—it made me feel a lot better, but I'm not sure that it made much difference to Lars. He did have more room to walk now in the long hallways—and that's how he spent most of his time.

An article written by social scientist Dorothy Jones Jessop in *Aging Today* about the transition from family home to nursing home was very helpful to me in understanding and coping with my own feelings at this time. She writes:

The transition from family home to nursing home is an event with a psychological and social enormity that is not always recognized, both for the person cared for and the caregivers. Caregiving at home for persons with disabilities is a family affair. I think that currently when someone places a relative in a nursing home there is often insufficient attention to the needs and reactions of caregivers and other family members. They, as well as the patient, need support.<sup>1</sup>

She goes on to explain what she thinks are some of the reasons that make this event so difficult—and she states that placing a family member in a nursing home is even more traumatic than dealing with a death. Some of her insights:

1. In a nursing home placement, unlike a death, a caregiver bears anxiety-producing responsibility for the decision and its implementation.
2. Relatives and friends share common grief reactions at a death, but lack common responses to a nursing home transition.
3. With a physical death, there are common shared rituals and responses that ease the transition, such as wakes, funerals etc. No such events mark a nursing home admission.
4. Implicit in the move to the nursing home is a movement to "social death," an exit from the community. It involves an acknowledgment of approaching biological death and present loss of function.

With regard to #3 above, I was reminded of a time when I attended a funeral of a friend of our family. I was grieving—not only for the loss of a friend, and feeling sympathy for his family—but also for myself. It was as though I felt envious of the widowed spouse because she was able to grieve publicly, supported by many others who were grieving with her.

Since I knew that we would not be able to bear the financial burden of nursing home care without help, I had been receiving help in planning for this phase of our lives from an attorney who had given me good legal advice. With his direction, I was able to protect some of our assets so that I would have sufficient funds to live on if I survived Lars. During the process of planning for our future, I learned that a family has to be either rich—and so handle the financial burden themselves, or poor in order to qualify for medical assistance. Being "financially able" means having between \$36,000 to \$50,000 a year to pay for the nursing home care. Since Lars had been turned down for Long Term Care Insurance, we had to make other plans. The medical insurance plan under our

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ELCA Pension Board has always been very adequate in taking care of our medical needs, but they, too, draw the line at “long term care.” The Board states in their policy that they will pay up to a certain amount (a very adequate amount) for each individual during his/her lifetime—for any medical condition or injury or surgery. I have protested that because Alzheimer’s Disease is a medical condition, those who suffer from this disease should also be covered under the church’s medical plan. But since nursing home care is called “custodial care,” it is not covered. The only thing we could do was apply for medical assistance.

I was very thankful that JohnE and Kate were here at that time to help me with all the legal aspects. The day after taking Lars to Ebenezer, JohnE and I had an appointment with a lawyer who specializes in Medical Assistance planning. We learned by the end of September that we qualified for assistance. Receiving this assistance was very helpful, but it also meant that I was no longer in charge of our finances. For this reason, I took out Long Term Care insurance for myself, realizing the need to plan for my future.



## 47. *"Where are we going?"*

When we drove away from home that day in September to take Lars to Ebenezer, I didn't think it would be the last time that he would be at home. I had thought that I would bring him home for a visit sometime. I was planning a birthday party for him in November, so I asked the nurses on his floor if they thought it would be all right for me to take him home for the party. They advised me to have the party in the Day Room at Ebenezer as they thought it would be too confusing for him if I took him home. Later in a conversation with Dr. Griffin, I asked his advice about what to do at Christmas time. His immediate response was, "Don't move him. If you take him home, you'll be doing it for yourself, not for him." He recommended having a family Christmas at Ebenezer instead. In both instances, I realized what good advice they had given me as it did work out very well to have the celebrations in his "home" where he had begun to feel quite comfortable.

After Lars entered the nursing home, my life had settled into a pattern that was quite consistent. I went to Ebenezer to spend time with him about three times a week. Unless there were other activities that prevented me from doing so, I went on Sundays to take him to the Chapel service, and then stayed with him into the afternoon. Though he didn't seem to understand much of the service, he still appeared to enjoy being there. Music continued to have a calming effect on him, and during his first months at Ebenezer, he joined in some of the hymn singing at church. That decreased as the months went by, as did his participation in prayer.



*Sunday dinner at Ebenezer—December, 1998*

He used to mouth the Lord's Prayer, but that, too, gradually ceased. But it was a joy to see how he responded with a look of anticipation when the chaplain came to him with the Lord's Supper. I would often have devotions with him in his room as I thought he might connect with a custom from our family life at home. Once during his second year at Ebenezer, after I had finished praying, he said, "That's good."

He also seemed to get a special gleam in his eyes when I told him that I loved him. Since I didn't know how much was getting through to him, I continued to do those things that I thought might give him some comfort or enjoyment. When he first went in to the nursing home, I didn't want to go away on trips. However, as he settled in to the routine and the stable environment, I took trips for a couple of weeks at a time—usually to visit family. In the summer of 1995, I went back to Japan with Joel and Ruth and children, and was gone for over three weeks. Sometimes after longer absences, it seemed that it took a little while before Lars recognized me. Whenever the children came home and visited him, or when his own family members or close friends came, he seemed to know them. The visitors we've had from Japan—Masako Yamamoto, our good neighbors the Hottas, Tsuges, Nakatas and Pastor and Mrs. Ogata—all seemed to bring a positive response. Since he had lost his ability to communicate by words, it was difficult to know how much he understood, but his smile seemed to be an indication of some measure of recognition.

"Where are we going?" This was a question Lars always asked when we were driving in the car. He asked it the day we took him to Ebenezer, and I have asked it myself many times since.

Our home in Forest Lake has proven to be a good family home and the children have been able to come quite regularly. Since they all live so far away, it's been a great advantage to have a house that can easily accommodate them when they have been able to visit. I have visited Joel and Ruth and family in Carmichael, California once or twice a year, and was there to welcome our youngest grand-daughter, Elsa Ione on October 21, 1996.



*Elsa Ione Ingulsrud*

In the summer of 1997, the whole family was home for a short period of time. The occasion was Leon and Akiko Aizawa's wedding. JohnE and Kate were not able to be here for the wedding—they had come for a few days in July on their way to Zimbabwe. The rest of the family were all here for the celebration. Leon was eager to have his dad present at his wedding, so the ceremony was in the chapel at Ebenezer with only the immediate family attending. (Russ and Alice Sanoden provided the music, and Gehard and Bertha Vorland, Leon's godparents, took the place of Akiko's parents.) Whether Lars had any understanding of what was going on is questionable, but we were all happy that he could be with us for this special occasion. Pastor Matsuda of the Japanese church officiated in the bilingual service. Later in the afternoon, we welcomed sixty guests to our backyard in Forest Lake for an outdoor buffet reception.





*Leon & Akiko's wedding at Ebenezer—August 18, 1997*

While I continued my life in our home, I valued the times that I could spend with Lars at Ebenezer. Right after he left to go into the nursing home, I lost some of the interest I had had in gardening—it seemed so pointless when there was no one to enjoy it with me. There were times when I came home after being out, and the feeling of aloneness would be so strong that I would cry out, "I hate being alone!"

As I write this, it is four and a half years since Lars left to go into Ebenezer. I have adjusted somewhat to living alone, helped tremendously by the support of our families, our many friends in the missionary community, and the new friends that we have made since settling in this area.

The trips that I have been able to take have been a source of renewal and enjoyment. In October, 1998, I was able to go to Japan again since I had acquired enough miles for a free ticket. Besides visiting Ruth and Mike, and JohnE and Kate in their homes, I was especially happy to go back to our former places of work. The highlight of those visits was joining with the members of the churches in the Hamana Ko area for a 45th

anniversary celebration. It had been 45 years since Lars had had his first meeting in Mikkabi. Though the number of members is not large, the faithfulness of the few have kept the witness of the gospel alive, and now grandchildren of the first members are in the church. The layman who gave the message that anniversary Sunday was the Christian lawyer whom Lars had baptized when he was a High School student, Yoshikazu Uchikawa. Several of the members expressed their appreciation for Lars' ministry in that area (two of the men he had baptized later became pastors). Ruth and Mike and JohnE also attended the celebration, which was followed by a memorial service at the mausoleum where Selma's and Baby Luke's ashes are interred with those of several other members from the churches in that area. Here again, the passage of time was evident as JohnE brought a short message. Years ago it was Lars who brought the message at those occasions.

Lars' absence was felt that Sunday and the friends gathered there grieved as they looked at pictures of Lars in his weakened condition. But they remembered with thanksgiving the work that he had done, and the many experiences that they had shared in that ministry.

Though there have been many things to enjoy, and it is true that time is a great healer, the grieving still goes on—it takes different forms, but it's always there.

I don't know what the future holds—I really don't know "where we'll be going." I guess the question I ask more is "Lord, how long?" But knowing that our times are in God's hands gives comfort and assurance that the Lord is with us. He is caring for His children, and is still working in our lives. Romans 8:28 reminds us of that truth:

*We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.*

We want to continue to heed His call and we know that He has a purpose for our lives even in our present situation. Lars used to say that there were only two places that he really wanted to go: "Nojiri in the summer and Heaven when I die." He can no longer go to Nojiri in the summer, and Heaven? He's still waiting for that call.

## Epilogue

Lars' call to Heaven came on Palm Sunday evening, March 28, 1999 at 4:47 p.m. He had been ill for a few days in February, just before I was going to leave for California for a couple of weeks. I delayed my trip for three days when he seemed to have recovered from what the nurses thought had been a urinary tract infection. While in California, I called Ebenezer every day to see how he was, and except for being weaker, they reported that he seemed to be all right. When I returned on March 6 and went to see him the next day, he had definitely gotten weaker and was in the wheel chair most of the time. He could walk for only a short distance. He hadn't given up, though, and would still try to walk after having been seated for awhile. He was not eating as well as he had before, and was having more difficulty in swallowing.

I took him to chapel as usual on March 14 and since he seemed so tired and slept most of the time during the service, I wondered if it was really worth it to bring him to the service. However, when they started singing "Amazing Grace," he joined in humming the melody—rather weakly, but I could hear that he had the tune. I realized then that "Yes, it was worth it."

The following Sunday, I arrived at Ebenezer in time to take him to Chapel thinking that it would be a regular Sunday with him. He was so restless and kept turning and trying to move in the wheel chair so I had to take him back to his room. We had moved him to a room in the west-wing as there was a vacancy and I was especially thankful for that as there was more space—now that he was in a reclining wheel chair. I had them bring our noon meal to his room, but he hardly ate anything—and what he did eat, he soon spit out again. He was very uncomfortable so we put him in his bed where he rested better. Later on that day, the nurses found that his kidneys were apparently not functioning. That problem was eased by catheterization, and by Tuesday, he started eating a little more. But that only lasted one day, and from then on, he ate and drank less and less until by Friday he had zero intake.

The nurse practitioner had told me on Thursday to call our children. I had been keeping them posted on his condition, but now I reported that the nurse said that he probably had less than a week left.

JohnE and Kate had arrived from Japan on Wednesday. This trip had been planned for some months, and their arrival couldn't have been more timely. I was so thankful to have them with me during those days. JohnE and I took care of some preliminary planning and then I reserved the guest suite at Ebenezer for Saturday and Sunday. I went in on Saturday morning with the intention of staying until the end.

Masako Yamamoto, who is like part of our family, was on a trip to eastern United States and was planning to come to Minnesota on April 6. We didn't know how we could contact her, but she had called Leon in New York and learned of Lars' condition. She changed her travel plans—at some expense—and arrived in Minneapolis on Saturday.

Gehard and Bertha Vorland had come to visit us at Ebenezer, and they went to the airport to meet Masako-san. That night, she slept in the guest apartment and I slept on a mat beside Lars' bed.

Lars had a very severe seizure on Saturday morning after they had gotten him up into his wheel chair. He had two more seizures during the night on Saturday. They kept him as comfortable as possible with medications but he was seemingly in a coma for most of the last two days. The staff members at Ebenezer were very caring and kind and did all that they could for Lars and for us as we kept vigil by his bed. Faith arrived from Vermont at noon on Sunday. We had several visitors on Saturday and Sunday, close friends and relatives. On Saturday afternoon, Chaplain David Engelstad came in and he and JohnE and I had a short "sending service" for Lars.

Amongst the visitors on Sunday were the three spouses of other residents on 4th floor. Bob, whose wife is a resident, stopped in after Chapel; Lois brought her husband Bob who had been Lars' room-mate; and Lyndon came with his wife. We four had often shared our concerns in our monthly support group, and it was so meaningful for me to have them come that afternoon. The nurse kept checking Lars' blood pressure and pulse and it became apparent that the end was not far off. Two of the aides who had helped care for him came in and sat by his bed awhile to say good-bye. They each gave me a hug, and I thanked them for being so good to him. One of them replied, "He was an easy man to be nice to."

After all our visitors had left, Masako-san, JohnE and Faith and I were all in the room when Lars' labored breathing stopped. It was a sacred moment, very difficult to describe. We realized that he was released from his suffering, but we felt the pain and the finality of our loss. We all wept, and as we knelt by his bed with our arms around each other, JohnE prayed a prayer of thanksgiving and relinquishment. The long struggle was over.

The next few days were busy with preparations for the funeral. Ruth came home from Japan within twenty-four hours of his death. It had been only three weeks since she had been here for a short visit. Mike and Steve remained behind in Japan. Joel and Ruth and children arrived on Wednesday. Leon had a two week work shop in Australia that he could not cancel, so he was unable to come, but Akiko came, as did Faith's husband Eric. Though they all returned for a sad occasion, it was a wonderful week that we were able to spend together. Masako-san's sister, Toshiko Yamamoto whom Lars had baptized over forty years ago, came from Edmonton with two of my sisters.

The funeral service was held at Faith Lutheran Church on Good Friday afternoon with Pastor Don Fultz officiating. Many of our missionary friends from Japan, and other missionaries and pastors, family members and friends joined us for the service as we remembered Lars' life, and the ways that the Lord had blessed him. Three of his Seminary classmates and colleagues in Japan participated in the service: Phil and Margaret Luttio (with daughter Karen and the Morks) sang a processional hymn "Blessed are They Who are called to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb," Russ Sanoden sang a favorite of Lars' which was also an expression of his faith, "I Know Whom I have Believed," and the congregation sang with him on the chorus as a continuation of the "sing-along" times he had conducted at Ebenezer; Doug Swendseid gave the sermon. He used the Good Friday text—Jesus' reply to the thief on the cross who asked Jesus to remember him. He noted that Lars had been remembered by Jesus from the time he was baptized, through his life-time as he obeyed the Lord's call to service, and now in his death.

In JohnE's greeting on behalf of the family, he thanked all who had supported Lars throughout his lifetime: his family in North Dakota and elsewhere; his colleagues from college days, Seminary and ministry in Japan; the friends he had met since retirement;

and those who cared for him during the four and a half years that he was a resident at Ebenezer Luther Hall.

He was buried at the Scandinavian Cemetery not far from our home in Forest Lake. The procession from the church to the cemetery took the route on South Shore Drive, going by our house. As the casket was being lowered into the grave, we all joined in singing familiar hymns, including one in Japanese. Then symbolically assisting in the burial, we all threw in a handful of soil as his body was now being returned to the earth. The verse that we had selected for the funeral folder, Micah 6:8, expressed what we felt was the theme of his life:

*...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

The messages in the many cards and letters that we received from those who had known Lars stirred our memories and we were reminded of how he had endeavored to live a life of doing justice and showing kindness in his walk with God. In the total picture of his life, the years that he was burdened by his illness no longer seemed so long. His life is now complete, and as witnessed by the words of Hebrews 12:2 inscribed on his gravestone, he is with Jesus to whom he looked as "*the pioneer and perfecter of his faith.*"



# *Chronology*

## *A Beil, Ingulsrud, and Nelson family chronology.*

- 1737        Balthazar Beil arrived in USA from Germany.
- 1763        Original Ingulsrud farm purchased by Anders Olson - Notodden, Telemark, Norway.
- 1798        Ingulsrud farm divided into North and South Ingulsrud.
- 1863        Ole Larson married Margit Haslekaas.
- 1877        November 19, Lars (Ingulsrud) born to Ole and Margit Larson, Notodden
- 1880        William Beil moved to Salina, Kansas
- 1885        Ole Larson sold South Ingulsrud farm to cousin Olav Ingolfsrud
- Ole Larson family immigrated to USA (North Dakota). Changed name to Ingulsrud.
- 1893        December 15, Alfred John Beil born in Salina, Kansas.
- 1895        August 17, Jacob Andreas (Olson) Nelson born, Gausvik, Norway.
- 1897        June 18, Agnes Constance (Austring) born, Austringen, Norway.
- 1899        January 28, Gina Froyland born, Lierbyen, Norway.
- 1899        October 28, Augusta Marie Bang born, Emporia, Kansas
- 1899        Lars Ingulsrud filed for homestead, Prospect Township, Edmore, North Dakota
- 1902        Johan Johnson and two oldest sons left Norway and arrived in North Dakota. Changed name to Austring.
- 1904        The rest of the Austring family came to North Dakota.
- 1903-08    Ole Nelson came to USA from Norway and worked for five years.
- 1904-07    Austring family lived and worked in Clifford, ND
- 1907        Austring family moved to a homestead near Stewart Valley, Saskatchewan.

## *Chronology*

- 1909 After one year in Norway, Ole Nelson returned to USA and his family joined him shortly after.
- 1910 August, Ole Nelson family moved to Swift Current, Saskatchewan and homesteaded south of the city.
- 1913 Jacob Nelson started his homestead south of Swift Current.
- 1915 Gina Froyland traveled from Norway to visit an uncle in North Dakota.
- 1917 July 7, Jacob Nelson and Agnes Austrang married.  
November 14, Lars Ingulsrud and Gina Froyland married.
- 1921 Alfred Beil received AB degree, Midland College, Freemont, Nebraska
- 1922 June 26, Alfred Beil and Augusta Bang married.  
November 21, Lars Milo Ingulsrud born.
- 1923 Alfred Beil received BD degree, Central Seminary, Freemont, Nebraska.
- 1923-26 Alfred Beil served Zion Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, Kansas.
- 1924 Selma Elizabeth Beil born.
- 1926 Jacob and Agnes Nelson purchased their farm.
- 1926-30 Alfred Beil served Grace Lutheran Church, Champaign, Illinois.
- 1927 Grace Lillian Nelson born.
- 1930-37 Alfred Beil served as Associate Pastor, St. John's Lutheran, Des Moines, Iowa.  
Selma Beil attended Smouse Opportunity School.
- 1929-41 Lars Milo attended Prospect School and Edmore High School.
- 1933 Grace started elementary education at Cedar Hill School, Blumenhof, Saskatchewan.
- 1932-34 Lars Milo and other family members in the TB sanitarium.
- 1937-40 Alfred Beil served First Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas.
- 1939-40 Lars trained in the Civilian Conservation Corp.
- 1940-47 Alfred Beil served Trinity Lutheran Church, Lawrence, Kansas.



- 1941      Lars graduated from Edmore High School, then took a correspondence course in electronics.
- 1942      October 15, Lars enlisted into the army.
- 1943      Lars trained at the University of Colorado, was inducted into the Army Signal Corps, and later accepted into the Army Specialized Training Program.
- September, Lars and Selma first met.
- 1945      February, Lars was sent to Europe with the 513th Airborne Signal Corp, and returned after the war ended in August.
- June, Grace graduated from High School, and in September enrolled at the Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute.
- October 16, Selma had heart surgery.
- September-October, Lars traveled with the Victory Loan Train.
- 1946      January 31, Lars released from the army.
- September, Selma enrolled at Midland College, Freemont, Nebraska.
- Lars enrolled at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota.
- 1947      July, Lars and Selma became engaged.
- July-August, Grace enrolled in the Teachers's Training Summer Course.
- 1947-49      Grace taught at Sunrise School, Hanley, Saskatchewan.
- 1947-49      Selma enrolled at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.
- 1949      June 6, Lars graduated from Concordia College.
- July 31, Lars and Selma married, Des Moines, IA.
- August 26, Selma graduated from Drake University.
- 1949-52      Lars enrolled at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN
- Lars and Selma lived at 2269 Brewster St.
- 1949-50      Summers, Grace continued Teachers' Training.
- Grace taught at Beaver Flat, Sask.
- 1950      April-June, Grace completed courses at LCBI and graduated.
- September 14, Ruth Marie born in St. Paul, MN.

## *Chronology*

- 1950-51      Grace taught in the Junior Room (Grades 1-6) in Hallonquist, Sask.
- 1952          May, Lars graduated from Luther Seminary, and  
June 8, was ordained.  
August, Lars and Selma commissioned as missionaries, and with Ruth Marie sailed to Japan arriving on August 15. Started language study.
- 1951-53      Grace taught elementary grades (1-3) in McMahon, Sask.
- 1953          April 19, Lars started work at Hamana Lagoon.  
May 30, John Eric born at SDA Hospital, Tokyo.  
June, Lars and Doug Swendseid bought a lot at Lake Nojiri.  
September, Grace enrolled in Mission Course at LBI, Minneapolis, MN.  
Lars and Selma, Ruth and JohnE moved to Hamamatsu.
- 1954          May, Grace graduated from LBI Mission Course, and was called to serve in Japan.  
July 5, Lars and Selma moved into the new house.  
Makoto Nakashima began helping Lars as interpreter.  
July 18, Grace commissioned as missionary and sailed for Japan on August 5 - arrived August 20.
- 1954-56      Grace studied the Japanese language in Tokyo and Shizuoka.
- 1955          January 18, Faith Elaine born in Tokyo.  
June-August, Grandpa and Grandma Beil visited Japan.
- 1956          July, Grace moved to Numazu to begin work.  
December 23, Lars' father, Lars Ingulsrud died.
- 1957          September 17, Luke Alfred born but died two days later.
- 1958-59      Lars and Selma and family on furlough - lived at 10 Lincoln Lane, Northfield, MN.
- 1959          March, Ingulsrud family returned to Japan.  
April 10, Crown Prince Akihito married Mickiko Shoda.

April 20, Selma entered SDA Hospital, Tokyo and was called to her heavenly home on May 12.

June, Lars and the children moved back to Hamamatsu.

Masako Yamamoto started working in the Ingulsrud home.

1960 May 17, Lars and Grace became engaged.

June-December, Grace spent furlough in Canada.

1961 January 23, Lars and Grace married in Shizuoka Lutheran Church.

1961-64 Lars continued work in Hamana Lagoon area.

Grace - full time mother and home-school teacher.

1961 September, Ruth entered Children's Hostel, and studied at American School in Japan, Tokyo.

1962 May 17, Joel Milo born, SDA Hospital, Tokyo.

Summer, first church building in Mikkabi.

1964 January 3, Leon Paul born, SDA Hospital, Tokyo.

June-July, family traveled to USA via Europe.

1964-65 Spent furlough year at 1335 Keston St., St. Paul.

1965 May, Grace became a citizen of the USA.

Ruth confirmed at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.

July, returned to Japan by ship and moved into Tokugawa Cho house in Nagoya.

September, Ruth, JohnE, and Faith enrolled at Nagoya International School.

Lars began surveying to begin new work along Chuo line.

1966 Lars' assignment changed to Toyota.

July-November, lived in Kariya while Toyota house was being built.

November 19, moved to Kakimoto Cho, Toyota.

1967 March, Lars purchased our first Toyota car.

May, Dr. Alfred Beil (Grandpa) died.

## *Chronology*

- July, Grace flew to Canada to attend Jacob and Agnes Nelson's Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary.
- 1968      June, Ruth graduated from High School at NIS.
- JohnE confirmed at Mission Retreat.
- September, Ruth enrolled at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.
- 1969      June, Faith confirmed at Mission meeting, Nagoya.
- 1970-71    Furlough year - lived at 2359 Buford St., St. Paul.
- 1971      January 2, Ruth and Mike Grubel married at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.
- June, JohnE graduated from Murray High School.
- June, sailed to Japan on the last voyage of the President Wilson.
- September, JohnE enrolled at Golden Valley Lutheran College, Minneapolis, MN.
- 1972      July 16, the dedication of the new Koromo Church.
- 1973      June, Faith graduated from High School, NIS.
- August, Faith left Japan and enrolled at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN.
- 1974      May - Ruth graduated from Indiana University, Kokomo, Indiana
- December, JohnE graduated from University of Minnesota.
- 1976-77    Spent furlough year in new Mission Apartments, St. Paul, MN
- 1976      September 17, first grandchild, Richard Lars born to Mike and Ruth Grubel..
- November, Joel confirmed at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.
- December, Faith graduated from Concordia College.
- 1977      May, Lars had kidney surgery, Minneapolis.
- June, left St. Paul and traveled to Canada for Nelson reunion. Celebrated Jacob and Agnes's 60th Wedding anniversary.
- July, returned to Japan by plane.
- September 2, Lars had back surgery in Nagoya.
- 1978      May, Leon confirmed at Motomachi Church.

- May, JohnE - MA degree (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.) U of M
- Summer - Ruth - MA degree, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- 1979 January - JohnE - M.Ed in Applied Linguistics, Columbia University
- 1980 May, Koromo Lutheran Church 30th anniversary.
- June, Joel graduated from High School, NIS
- June- August, traveled through Europe and spent the rest of the summer fur-lough in USA
- 1981 March, Motomachi Church organized.
- August, Lars' mother (Gina) died.
- August, Leon left Japan and enrolled for his last year of High School at LCBI, Outlook, Sask. Our first time without children at home.
- Joel enrolled at LBI, Seattle, WA.
- 1982 May, farewell service at Koromo Lutheran Church. Grace left for Seattle and Canada, Lars left one month later.
- Faith graduated with an MA degree from the Conway School of Landscape Design.
- June, Leon graduated from High School, LCBI.
- August 16, Grandma Beil (Augusta) died.
- August 24, second grandson, Stephen John born to Mike and Ruth Grubel.
- 1982-83 Study Leave - Lars and Grace lived in Mission apartments, and took classes at Luther Seminary. Joel enrolled at Minneapolis Community College and lived at home.
- 1983 May 15, Faith and Eric Avildsen married in Massachusetts.
- 1983-85 Joel and Leon enrolled at University of Minnesota.
- 1983 July, Lars and Grace returned to Japan and started new assignment in Sendai.
- August - July , 1985 -JohnE in China, taught English at University in Hefei.
- 1985 July-August, two-month home leave.

## *Chronology*

July, Ingulsrud family reunion (in Montana) observing one hundred years since their father arrived in USA.

August, Lars started medical tests at University of Minnesota Hospital.

October 16, Grace's father, Jacob Nelson died. Grace went to Canada for the funeral.

1985-87      Lars and Grace - role reversal - in Sendai work.

1986          June 28, Joel and Ruth Gilmore's wedding at North Oaks, MN. Lars and Grace came from Japan for the wedding.

June 29, the family celebrated our 25th Wedding anniversary at a Chinese restaurant.

Ruth - PhD in Political Science, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

July, Joel and Ruth went to Japan and Joel was hired as an interpreter for two years.

1987          July 31, left Sendai to start retirement. Arrived at the Mission Apartments on August 30.

September 7, signed the purchase agreement for the house in Forest Lake, MN.

September 15, Lars diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

October 21, third grandson, Alec Milo born to Joel and Ruth.

1988          January - JohnE - Ed. D in Applied Linguistics, Columbia University. Left for China to teach in Nanjing.

Joel started his own business - Third Culture Enterprises, Inc..

1989          February 4, JohnE and Kate Allen married in Zimbabwe. Lars and Grace went for the wedding and also traveled in South Africa.

April 12, Grace's mother (Agnes Nelson) died.

1990          July-August, Lars and Grace went to Japan.

1991          June 4, first grand-daughter, Laura Grace born to Joel and Ruth.

1992          June 4, Grace had surgery for gastric cancer.

December, Lars started going to Adult Day Care.

1993          February, Lars and Grace spent three weeks in Arizona with other Ingulsruds.

- 1994      August, JohnE and Kate returned from China.
- September 4 week-end, our first family reunion in eight years, at home in Forest Lake.
- September 7, Lars entered Ebenezer nursing home.
- 1995      April, JohnE and Kate moved to Japan to teach at a Lutheran College in Kyushu.
- 1996      April-June, Ruth and Mike and Steve moved to Japan, Ruth to teach at a Methodist College (Kwansei Gakuin) in Nishinomiya.
- October 21, our second grand-daughter, Elsa Ione born to Joel and Ruth.
- 1997      January, Leon and Akiko Aizawa married in Japan. The wedding and reception was in August in Forest Lake, MN.
- 1998      March, Leon graduated from Columbia University - Master of Fine Arts.
- 1999      March 28, Lars Milo called to his heavenly home.
- After six years of work, Grace finished writing this Memoir.





# *Maps*



Map art by Faith Ingulsrud

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