



*My Passions
- for Jesus
& for Others*

*How God has Worked in and Through Me
... So Far*

by Ruth Marlene Friesen

Chapter 1

First, I Need Jesus Myself

My parents carried me to church when I was a week old. They dedicated me to the Lord as a baby. I feel the Lord marked me for His own even earlier, for it says in Ephesians 1:4 "*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*"



I was sensitive, imaginative and eager to learn. With my vivid imagination, and role as big sister to two brothers, and in due time two sisters, I was often in charge of them, inventing games and home-made toys, and reading to them - once I got to school and learned to read in English, that is. (My first language was Plautdietsch, also known as Low German)

I loved Sunday School, Bible stories, and what I could understand of church services. I believed in God, and Jesus, and His death and resurrection. I can't remember not believing. I loved the missionary stories, and had a passion for souls; I wanted to see souls saved, or come to know Jesus, but that may have been picked up from what I heard in church.

Mom's cousin, Rev. John D. Friesen, (well-known in the Saskatchewan valley area and later, beyond), started preaching in our village and immediate area when he was 18 years old. As a gifted, passionate speaker, he could switch between three languages, translating for himself fluently between English, German and Plautdietsch. He used lots of little stories or illustrations, and I usually understood those best. (I was taught to call him "Uncle John" out of respect).

As Uncle John's reputation and fervor grew, he arranged for tents in which to have gospel crusades. When I was about nine he had one in my great-aunt and uncle's metal quonset. It was on the John Thiessen farm. I went forward each night for the children's feature when Uncle John usually had an object lesson or short story that explained the gospel message for children. I clearly believed, and picked up that I must make a personal decision to accept Jesus as my Saviour and to surrender my life to Him. At the end of the service, when he gave an altar call for those ready to make this decision to come forward, I felt a tugging in my heart that I should go, but I turned shy. Besides, I saw that just adults were going forward.

I lost my nerve to go forward at that time several evenings in a row. My inner tension, finally, even during the day, was so strong that I resolved that this next evening I would go forward, no matter what!

But that next evening a severe thunder and lightening storm broke out after the service had begun. The noise of the rain (and maybe hail) pelting on the metal building was so loud that even with the public address system, Uncle John could hardly be heard. Then he interrupted himself to say that he would dismiss us, but that if we wanted to do business with God we could still do that privately at home. We should not put it off.

I remember Dad and Mom were very tense driving home as the car swerved right and left on the muddy, country road, and the sky cracked and burst with bright strikes of lightening. I could tell this was not a

good time to say anything to them.

That night in bed I had a dream. I was playing with some second cousins who were home on missionary furlough at their grandparents' farm just beyond our village, and that farm had a woods. We were chasing around among the trees, when suddenly there was a fire in the little cabin where these cousins were staying. I was as busy as anyone, helping to hand the littlest kids and babies out of the burning cabin, and then panting and racing after them to get away from the smoke and fire.

I woke suddenly, and knew instinctively that a fire represents hell, but that I was not truly safe from hell myself until I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour. I had wanted to do that at the service, but. . . Then I recalled what Uncle John had said about being able to be saved anywhere by just praying, confessing my sin, and asking Jesus to forgive me.

There is a verse known as the 'gospel in a nutshell', John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" However, two verses further on it says, "*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*" So I knew; if I didn't deliberately choose to receive Christ as my own personal Saviour, I was condemned to hell automatically.

Knowing that dreams can disappear in the morning sunlight, when we are not sure they happened, I decided that I better get out of bed and kneel on the cold floor so that I would remember that I did this. I got out of bed, knelt, and asked Jesus to forgive and save me so that I could truly be a soul-winner and a witness for Jesus. I have never forgotten that experience, but I did have trouble telling others about it for a while.

Chapter 2

Camp and Assurance of Salvation

I couldn't bring myself to tell my parents the next morning, and a few days later when Uncle John came around to visit I just got tongue-tied and couldn't blurt out, that I was saved too - much as I wanted to tell him.

Today I see the great importance of letting others know of our salvation decision, for Satan used it against me back then. Any time I had an impatient spirit, or grumbled when I was called away from a book, or got angry at my brother, I felt convicted and ashamed. I worried that my private prayer had not been good enough to save me. What if I were not saved after all?

A certain Mr. Alfred Friesen came around to our country schools on behalf of the Mid-Prairie Scripture Mission at certain times of the year. When he came in with his apple box of prizes, the teacher would tell us all to lay down our pencils and to sit up and listen. Then she gave Mr. Friesen the floor.

He often told a Bible story, and explained the importance of hiding God's Word in our hearts. In fall he would leave long (legal length) sheets with 8 groups of Bible references. We could each have a sheet. We were to recite them to our teacher once we knew the verses. Then the teacher was to record which verses we had recited perfectly, and when he came again, he would give out prizes.

There were eight sections with 25 verses in each, and we could get a fancy pencil for saying the first 5 verses. If we recited whole sections, we would get to choose either a Danny Orlis book, or some other objects in his box of similar value, or if we declined the group prizes and went for the big prize, by memorizing all 200 verses without taking a prize, we could have either a red letter Bible, or two free weeks at Redberry Lake Bible camp in the summer!

I did a lot of memorizing, over several years. The year I turned 12, I won the two weeks at camp!

I still had my doubts about my salvation, and whether I was really saved whenever I got cross or impatient with others, or felt misunderstood and hurt. But those two weeks at camp were a turning point for me.

My cabin counsellor seemed to see through me and understand me, and of course, I was delighted at making new friends. At the end of the two weeks, at the last campfire before bedtime, we were invited to come throw a log on the fire and give a short testimony for Jesus.

I wanted to do that but I was squirming. My counsellor noticed and nudged me to go ahead. Finally I did. I don't recall exactly what I said, but I blurted out something about having memorized a lot of verses, and learning to know and love the Lord better.

The astonishing thing to me was the peace that followed. At last, after about three years of wrestling with it, I'd managed to publicly say that Jesus was my Lord and Saviour.

It proves true Jesus' words in Matthew 10:32-33, "*Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in Heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*"

However, I wasn't perfect by any means, and at home, even though I told Mom excitedly about everything I'd seen and done at camp, I soon found myself with un-Christ-like thoughts and words. So I began to worry again.

We were now living in Hague, and attending church in the former Venice school house in the village of Blumenthal (a sister church of the one in Chortitz). My youngest sister Erma was a year old already, and since Mom was sickly, I ended up doing a lot of babysitting, and carrying Erma around on my hip as Mom was weak and exhausted most of the time.

A few weeks after camp, Uncle John (Rev. John D. Friesen), came to speak in the Venice church. I looked forward to hearing him, as I could understand his messages, but that morning I was pacing in and out of the cloakroom with Erma. Whenever I could I stepped out of the cloakroom to listen to the message, for he had announced that it was about knowing for sure that you were saved. I could not get everything but I did hear him say that if you were not sure whether you were saved, you should read 1 John chapter 5 over and over, watching for the word "know" until you knew whether you were saved or not.

There was more about not being perfect, but in a growing process.

I remembered that instruction though. So that afternoon I took my Bible to the shady side of the house, and sat down to study 1 John 5. I read verses like; I John 5:9-12, "*We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.*

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

I DID believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and that I had come to God through Him, so then I was a child of God. **I had received eternal life.** I promised the Lord that I would never waffle or doubt my salvation again. And I never have. That concern has never troubled me a single moment since then!

But oh, life was just beginning for me!

Chapter 3

A Passion for Souls

The following winter, on a Sunday afternoon, in bed, recovering from mumps, I heard a Billy Graham program on the radio where the vast jungles of Ecuador were described, and how many thousands of people there had never heard the gospel.

I could just visualize all that! My heart began to ache with passion for those people who would die before anyone could bring the gospel to them. I rolled over in bed with an ache in my chest, weeping because even if I went as an adult, by that time many would have died and gone to hell.

A sleepy state may have over-taken me, or else I just had a vivid daydream, but I saw how, when I became an adult and tried to go out as a foreign missionary, I would be prevented because of health problems. However, I would write a book, and end up marrying a very nice doctor with a big house, and we'd start to adopt all kinds of needy and unwanted children. When I woke later I knew instinctively that God had a special plan for me, and it might not involve a missionary role in the usual sense. However, if this was a prophetic dream I better keep it to myself as that would not go over well with my parents or my church!

From that time on, I had several secret passions. A passion for souls to be saved, and for me to be a soul winner. A passion to learn to write, and to start practicing right away. Most especially though, a passion to walk and talk with the Lord, so that He could tell me more exactly what He wanted me to do.

Since I had no one else to confide in, I began to have even more running conversational prayers, in which I brought all my feelings and emotions, ideas, and daydreams on my dearest Friend. I read the Bible for cues so that He could speak to me in response. I believed that God's most reliable way of speaking to me was through His Word.

Not long after that the rural Chortitz church and the Venice church were amalgamated into one that was located in Hague. We could walk over the train tracks to our church. I was allowed to join the choir and the youth group as soon as I was 13.

One Sunday Pastor Bill Stoesz preached on the parable of the master giving his servants talents. I knew the story well, but that day he stressed that we should not bury our talents, but rather use them to serve the Lord. As I listened, I found myself praying in my running conversational way along this line, "Well, Lord, I would, but I haven't got any talent. I can't sing, speak, do anything special." (Pastor Stoesz was naming various gifts and abilities). "About the only thing I'm known for is my vivid imagination, and that's not in those Bible lists of gifts in this sermon. But Lord, if You count that as a gift, by all means, it's Yours! I give it to You!"

I was still shy outside of the family, but I enjoyed working with children, and so when a teacher training course was offered during the Sunday School hour by Bill Neudorf, (he, with his wife Erma and baby

daughter were headed to Morocco as missionaries), I eagerly joined.

Shortly after I finished the course a young woman who was going to the hospital for a couple of weeks asked if I'd take her teaching kit and teach her class. I was happy to say yes, and I absolutely loved teaching! I did my best to apply everything I'd just learned in the course. When I saw Mary back in church I tried to return her kit, but she waved me off, and said I could continue. That was the start of many happy years in children's ministries in church.

When I felt convicted that I should ask for baptism and take the pre-baptism classes during the Sunday School hour, my best friend, Esther Stoesz, and her brother Bill, the pastor's children, also did, and we were baptized together by Uncle John who came to do the honours. (Mom was in the hospital in Saskatoon at the time and missed that service, however she had seen to it that I had my first 'purchased' suit for the occasion).

Chapter 4

Hunting for Souls in Saskatoon

After high school I got a job at Sasktel as a telephone operator. Because of shift-work, Mom felt I should get a room in the city so I wouldn't be driving home late at night. However, I sometimes drove around the city late at night, watching for someone in great need, so that I could live out my high school dreams of being a soul-winner. Only - it never happened. I craved to be a soul winner, but I never seemed to be in the right time or place for it to happen.

After a while, when my vivid daydreams didn't come to pass, I felt that the Lord was showing me that they were fodder for a book; if they happened I'd never have time to write books.

So I began to work secretly on a novel; I was afraid of being scoffed at, and feared that would kill my dream. Now I pumped that book full of the experiences that I had thought were going to happen to and through me.

On one level, shift-work was ideal for being a writer, but I still felt short-changed in that I was not a soul-winner like I had thought I was to be. I still had a passion for souls to be saved, but either I was too shy, or something conspired to keep me from being a soul winner and bringing others to faith in Christ.

After four years, when I'd paid off my '68 Nova, I decided to cash in my superannuation fund at Sasktel and go east as far as London, Ontario. I had worked my novel over seven times, and thought it must be ready for publication, but there were no publishers in the Saskatoon phone book. So I decided I had to go east. I had a single aunt living there, and expected all kinds of miracles when I got there.

Again, things didn't happen as I had imagined, but some unusually good things did start to happen.



Chapter 5

Ministries for my Imagination in London

Aunt Jean introduced me to many of her friends, but she moved away to Burlington shortly after I arrived, as she had been offered a good job there.

Although I made new friends easily enough, the Lord Jesus was still my closest and dearest Confidant and Friend. I continued to share all my thoughts and feelings and questions and ideas with Him by the hour! I realized that if I didn't have that relationship with Him, I would simply lose my mental balance. That unique relationship allowed me to 'tell it all to Jesus', and kept me from going insane or sinking into deep depression.

I reached a point, however, where I humbled myself before the Lord, and confessed I had misunderstood His will. I asked to start over with Him.

I started job hunting, resigned to even working in a factory, something I had always thought was anathema to my busy mind.

A temporary agency sent me first to a lingerie factory, and then to Philips Electronics, which made light bulbs. In both cases I worked as a switchboard operator. At Philips I trained others for the job, but they didn't work out, or didn't show up, so finally Philips hired me full-time.

The 1970s was the era of the 'Jesus people', and so I went to a coffee house in a United church which had a ministry to street people. After just a time or two I had to face the fact that I was like a fish out of water. I could not relate to those people. Besides, the smoke just tied my sinuses into knots!

Pastor John A. Robb, at the Alliance Church, with his Irish lilt said one Wednesday at prayer meeting, "Ruth, I believe the Lord wants you to teach Sunday School!"



I did miss my little Sunday School class from Hague, so I agreed, and with that, I began 12 years of children's ministries, etc., in that church.

Soon I had a very special relationship with this church. They discovered that I was willing to try things if just asked, and I threw heart and soul into my work for the Lord. They seemed to praise every effort I made, whether that was in children's ministries or in designing backdrops for the missions conference, - whatever. They made it safe to have more creative ideas!

Soon my involvements multiplied! Howard, the Sunday School Superintendent, had what he called a Brinkmanship theory or policy. He believed that if he pushed a volunteer over the brink of what they thought they knew or could do, they would sink or swim, and he was tickled that I swam. He made me the Sunday School Secretary, which meant that I ended up doing much of his work behind the scenes.

When Laura Finch, the Pioneer Girls Chief Guide died suddenly the next summer of a brain aneurysm, the church leaders asked if I'd take on her Chief Guide role. I was nervous but I wanted to serve the Lord - so I agreed if they would walk me through it by prayer. We had our Tuesday night Pioneer Girls meetings with the Trailblazer girls, (I delegated other leaders to be in charge) and the Colonists, (11-13 year olds, later called Shakari) which I led myself. On Wednesdays I came to the mid-week prayer meeting with my lists of prayer requests. Again, that little church was very supportive and I grew spiritually, and in leadership skills.



The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 9:10, *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might;...* I sure did. I learned in Pioneer Girls to let my enthusiasm show—it helped draw and hold the attention of the girls, and persuaded them that my message was worth while.

It was especially exciting to be able to lead some of the girls to faith in Christ, and the regular meetings gave me a chance to disciple and train them in the Christian walk. I planned ways of meeting with "my girls" one on one, or by twos and threes, for picnics in the park, or any excuse to spend more quality time with them.

The new Pastor, Franklin Thomas and his wife, Donna, had been missionaries to India, so it wasn't long before we worked up some great backdrops and displays for our missions conferences. I loved that too! My creative ideas were honoured and respected.

When the Thomases left, I became one of the leaders that led prayer meetings for a new pastor. When Pastor Luke Rienstra and their growing family came, (they adopted kids from other countries), he asked me to become the church secretary as well, on top of all I was already doing.

The church found \$50 a month to pay me and I did most of the typing work from my Philips' job. I was often at church four to five evenings a week, but I did the church typing from my Philips' desk, and the Sunday bulletins. These I cranked off on the old manual Gestetner they brought to my apartment.

Besides all this I had time at my job to spend leisurely hours in Bible study and prayer, and preparing for Pioneer Girls lessons, and crafts and other activities.

One other quiet hidden ministry I took up there was intercession. I don't usually mention that to people, but it is still part of my spiritual life and ministries.

When I recognized that my Gr'ma back in the Altenheim in Warman, was praying for each of her large clan by name, and that she was aging, it came to me that I needed to pick up this work before she was gone so it would carry on unbroken. I began to make lists of all my relatives, and my friends, and the missionaries I knew, and broke them up into shorter lists, and then started cycling through them day by day. To help me concentrate through office interruptions, I wrote out my prayers in school notebooks, and then binders. There have been moments when I wonder if I should use that time for other things, but after all I've read on prayer, and the relationship I have with the Lord, it just seems wrong to stop.

A constant refrain through all my praying and my thoughts was my passion for souls - I wanted to witness for Jesus, and be a soul winner. My daydreams still focused on showing individuals how to receive Christ as their Saviour and then to grow in their Christian faith, their prayer life, and their involvement in church. I wanted to see others mature as I was maturing. Through my children's ministries in church I was wading in those waters.

But why was it so hard to strike up such a conversation with strangers? As a receptionist I had people come through the door, but they seemed to catch me off guard, and I worried about what the management would think.

Gradually though, over much reading, thought and prayer, I came to understand that such scenes would not happen as long as I was trying to manufacture them. I needed to let the Holy Spirit guide and prompt me, and just let my spiritual life bubble up out of me naturally.

I read and listened to everything about abiding in the vine and bearing fruit (especially in John chapters 14-16), but many more, like Luke 12:11-12, which says, "*Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*" Rather than worrying ahead of time, I should trust the Holy Spirit to show me what to say - as needed.

I began to notice it happening! Just a small conversation with a salesman, or someone from the production floor here and there. The more I relaxed the more frequently they happened. The best ones of course, happened with my Pioneer Girls. I saw that as the place to witness most suited to me.

Even now I'm convinced we must be enthusiastic in our witnessing, rather than mechanical in presenting the gospel. Let our devotion and awe of God show plainly in our life and presentations. I don't always succeed, but that's what I aim to do.

When my youngest sister, Erma, came to live with me, in 1980, my apartment seemed too crowded. My friend Shirley Ella thought I should rent her boss's house on The Ridgeway, so that I could rent out rooms to Christian college girls like she did.

Sure enough, that worked out. Soon I was like a den mother to several other young women. They all had bedrooms on the second floor while I claimed the basement for my own suite. It was in a lovely older home on a walnut-treed little street alongside the Thames river.

This started another whole chapter of interesting experiences with these young ladies for three years.

In so many ways my life seemed full and exciting and fulfilling as long as I kept my private dream hushed up and quietly to myself, and continued in a waiting mode for God to bring my dream husband and marriage to pass. I was living up to my name, Ruth, for I'd discovered it had two meanings, "friend" and "compassionate."

But I was about to enter a spiritual battle and a major life-changing decision.

Chapter 6

A Life Changing Spiritual Battle and Move

Mom called one day, and said the doctor thought she should have a maid for housework; she'd told him she wouldn't hire anyone as long as she had a single daughter. This put me in a tailspin of debate with the Lord in my devotional life. I asked questions, and faced whether my dream, and all my church ministries were in fact God's will for my life. For two years I wrestled with this almost daily in my prayers.

Moving back to Hague would mean giving up my dream, my ministries at church, and my house full of tenants. (Well not always; it was hard some-times to find suitable girls to move in).

I flew home for my summer holidays in 1982 to check out my parents' need. I convinced myself that they could still manage.

But my spiritual battle continued. I went home again in 1983, hoping for a clearer sign. Scenes happened that conspired to make it seem like the worst idea possible. But I could tell they were tactics of Satan.

I hunted through my Bible for some passage that would be God's direction. The one that stopped me in my tracks every time I turned back to it was in Jeremiah 15. I didn't fully understand it then, but knew it somehow applied to me.

Agonizing in prayer, wanting to do God's will no matter what the cost, I finally saw what would be God's ideal will, but that He was not pushing me. I had the freedom of choice.

I believed that God was inviting me to go home, to show my parents I loved them, and get this thing out of my system that they misunderstood me and didn't really love me in a way that healed and satisfied.

In return, God promised me JOY, (that was what persuaded me), and that I would have time to write freelance at last - without hiding it.

But - it would also mean, finally, once for all, giving up my dreams.

Knowing that my parents feared financial burdens above all else, I drafted up an agreement with my parents that I would come home to care for them as long as they needed me, and they would only owe me free room and board - I would trust God for anything beyond that. We all signed it.

Back in London for the month of August, I wrote resignation letters, for my job and all my positions in church, sold and gave away my house full of stuff, packed 64 cartons of things to ship to Hague via CN Rail, and on Labour Day got on a bus and was astonished to find myself suddenly weeping quietly but uncontrollably. My face was awash with tears.

When I changed buses in Toronto, my Aunt Jean and friend Ruth Cairns met me there, and Aunt Jean said, "you can always change your mind."

"No," I said, bawling, "I've burned all my bridges behind me. I am resolved to live with this decision now." But oh-h-h, it hurt. It HURT! I had never realized just how attached I was to all my friends and my life in London. I left 12 crucial years of my life in London.

Just the night before I left London, in the evening service at West London Alliance, we had learned a new worship chorus with these words;

*"Emmanuel, Emanuel,
His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us - revealed in us,
His name is called Emmanuel."*

I don't usually learn music on first hearing it, but whenever I relaxed a bit, or tried to pray, I heard those words sung in my heart and mind. If I tried to sing along, I just croaked and began to cry afresh; however, if I listened, I heard the gentle words. It was not in my own voice, or any that I recognized, but after a while I was just convinced that the Holy Spirit was singing to, or over me.

All through my trip I heard that song over and over again. My Lord was allowing me to grieve this big change in my life, and He was comforting me.

Later I found Psalm 42:8, which says, "*By day the LORD directs His love, at night His song is with me --*" and Zephaniah 3:17 has this gem, "*The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*"

I arrived in Saskatoon 48 hours later, dried out from the inside. Dad and Mom picked me up, and when I was unpacking a suitcase at home I was sick enough to throw up so I went to bed.

That same evening a call came that Grandma Friesen in Clearbrook, BC, had died. Mom and Dad took a bus the next morning, to go west for the funeral. I was in no shape to go anywhere so I stayed in bed for four days.

Then my 64 boxes arrived, and I started unpacking in my long basement room that became my personal space.

Chapter 7

By Still Waters - The Hague Years

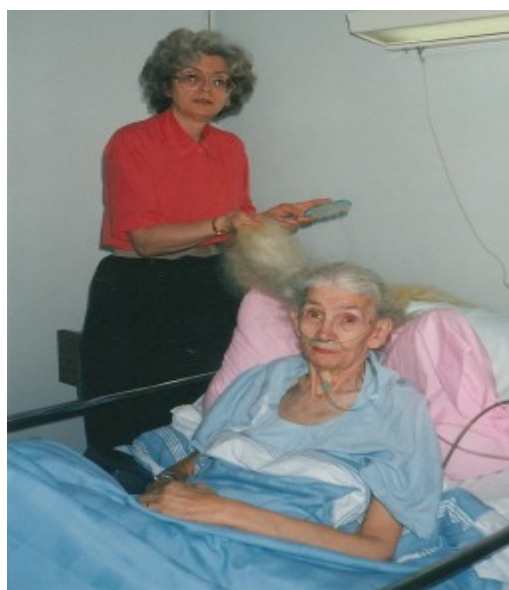
For 23 and a half years I was a live-in caregiver for my parents. Mom lived another 14 years after I returned, and Dad almost another ten years after that. Mostly I thought of those years as very long, lonely and weepy years, but now in retrospect I've learned to appreciate them because I drew so much closer to the Lord. So many times I had to lean on Him, or despair of life.



I learned to count even my smallest blessings every night. Here are a few of the major blessings;

1. Almost zero income taught me to be resourceful with what I had at hand, and to be grateful for every little gift, even cast-offs. I learned to believe that whatever I really needed, God would provide. (Psalm 34:10)

2. I see now that God knit together in me the traits of creativity and tenderheartedness from Dad, and the tough discipline and attention to detail from Mom to make me a stronger, more mature person than I was before.



3. The Lord never scolded or wearied of me spending hours unloading my feelings and thoughts and ideas and longings on Him. I sent out some freelance articles and stories and a few were published, but most of my need to be heard was met by pouring myself into my prayer journals. But then, that developed writing skills too.

4. I had some precious years in children's ministry at Neuanlage Grace Mennonite Church, with Sunday School, AWANA and directing VBS for several summers.

5. Spending so much time with seniors, Mom, Dad, Gr'ma Kroeker, and others in Hague, chauffeuring them to appointments, getting into genealogy, translating old diaries, writing A Godly Inheritance, (a 4 lb tome to honour my Gr'ma) and so on, - it all helped me to learn to understand and relate to adults as well as children.

6. It was an honour and great learning experience to care for Gr'ma at our house for nine months, until there was an opening for her at the Rosthern Nursing Home. Yes, stressful, but an honour, nevertheless.

7. In learning to read and translate the old Gothic German script in translating Gr'ma's diaries, I gained a rare and valuable skill. (Mind you, that skill fades with lack of use).

8. I had pledged in London, to write my PenPals every month. That effort, and their correspondence with me helped me to feel I was still in touch with the outside world. My list grew as I met and signed up for prayer letters from more missionaries.

9. I was able to be there for Mom until her death at home on November 10, 1997 of congestive heart and kidney failure. It was her wish to die at home.

10. After Mom died I cleaned the house thoroughly, and then buckled down to re-write my long buried novel. It had begun to burn in me so that I had a craving to re-do it with a new approach. Reading about the internet, I decided I was ready to go online and learn to self-publish in earnest.

11. In fact, though I'd felt I was the creative, non-logical type, I told the Lord that I was willing to be made a business woman if He wished to do that with me. My last ten years with Dad were an amazing education about doing business online, which have given me skills for the work I do now.

12. I was there for Dad until he died in the hospital four days after turning 91, on February 24, 2007. I have the satisfaction of knowing I did what I promised to do, and I generally did my best - so I have a clear conscience.

13. Although I didn't feel I had accomplish much in published writings or books during those caregiving years, the tilling of my spirit and soul are bearing much fruit now. I build websites, which in many ways, is like writing and publishing books, and I correspond with people and mentor them out of the spiritual depths the Lord put into me during those decades at home in Hague. The words flow out of me all day long, and I have great joy in many forms of writing!

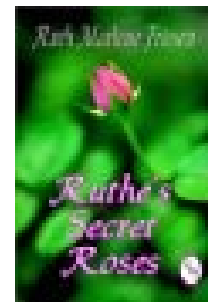
14. In fact, I was able to publish my novel, **Ruthe's Secret Roses**, as a Print-on-Demand (POD) book, in 2001, still available from Booklocker.com, and my own site <https://Ruthes-SecretRoses.com>. However, I had long years before promised God that I would dedicate all the profits to Him if it should ever get published. For many years that was going to be my main life's thrust for being a soul winner.

(For the last 12 years, having to meet my own living expenses, I've put promoting that book on the back burner; perhaps I'll have a time yet in the future when I can work on it in earnest).

15. Cleaning up my parents' home and estate and moving into a place of my own in Saskatoon was a very exhausting climax that took five months. But I went out full, being able to take, at a bargain, all the furniture I needed, and experiencing God's provisions in miraculous ways.

[Note: each of the above could form another in-depth chapter or two!]

My heart can sing heartily this verse,
"Many, O LORD, my God,
are the wonders You have done.
The things You planned for us
no one can recount to You;
were I to speak and tell of them
they would be too many to declare." (Psalm 40: 5)



Not for a minute would I wish troubles and hard times on anyone else, but I do see now that these are the blessed means by which God matures and ripens our lives so that we can bear all the sweeter fruit of the Spirit.

If, in our devotional time, we are begging the Lord for a closer walk with Him, and that we might be able to bear more fruit, such as winning souls to Christ, we can know that He is starting to answer our prayers when troubles come. So this is not the time to despair and beg to be immediately lifted out of our troubles. This is where we must cling to Him and walk on forward. Even if it feels like stumbling.

After we pass through the deserts and the valley of the shadow of death, we will come out to a green and spacious place. Our joys will be greater than all we have suffered! My past was preparation and training for what I do now.

Chapter 8

Becoming a Multitasking Business Woman!

Once my caregiving years were over and I had cleaned up my parents estate, miraculously, I found myself in a little wee green house in Saskatoon. A home-owner of all things! In 1999 I had started volunteering for Western Tract Mission, by building a website for them from home, and then became a Board member, and took on the Editing and layout work of *Reflections* for printing each quarter. At my new time of changes, in 2007, the people at Western Tract Mission made me a missionary so that friends and volunteers could contribute to my support and be receipted. Some did.

I was no longer able to be a Board member if I received monies through the WTM books, but the Board said they liked the way I took Minutes, so they asked that I continue as secretary **to** the Board (instead of "**of** the Board"). I could still take part in discussions, and contribute reports, but not vote or make a motion.

My pledged support was not enough to live on, but I'd already begun thinking like a business woman back in Hague, and decided to try to behave like one. My website building skills got me a couple of paying part-time client jobs. Once I know my course, I persevere!

When I told the Board of my dream of renting the three-room office suite upstairs for my business, hoping to offer small classes in computer training, they were very willing to let me get started right away. Refusing to go into debt and not being able to afford advertising, meant that my business grew very slowly. But I see now that I needed that time to shift my lifestyle, and integrate all my commitments.

I took on all kinds of responsibilities. My assignments for the mission increased as I spent Monday through Friday in the office and became close to the other WTM missionaries.

I assigned certain evenings to each of my website clients, and tried to save some mornings to work on my own business sites. It seemed I was able to find a slot of time for every opportunity that came along, but nothing moved forward in huge strides. I just make plodding progress on all fronts. However, I thoroughly enjoy my multitasking business woman lifestyle. I felt like the Lord has been preparing me all my life long for this stage. In little ways I was able to serve and bless many ministries.

Sometimes I wondered if God didn't allow the internet to be invented just for me! I enjoyed connecting with people from all parts of the world via emails and the circus of over 20 websites that I built and maintained. (Some of them are on a 'back burner' for a while; they don't disappear if I'm not working on them constantly).

All the effort I had put into writing and re-writing my novel over the years gave me the confidence to freely write web pages, articles, tracts, emails and whatever needs doing and without a lot of self-searching. So fulfilling. The websites brought, (and still do), comments and responses from the contact forms

that allow me to form new pen pal like relationships and often I'm mentoring, or advising someone about the Christian life, or writing or publishing, - many things. That was especially fulfilling.

I seem to connect with people in third world countries, running a small mission or ministry. Naturally, they begged for funds to do their work. Others might brush them off, not wanting to be bothered by them, but I took time to show them some kindness, and often I gained new friends. This led to me offering to build a website for a few of them. That added to my load of ministry streams going on in my life.

When I was ready to find a new home church in the city, I visited a number of churches, then narrowed down my choices and decided that Erindale Alliance church would be my new church family. I became involved in the ESL class during Sunday School hour, helping newcomers to Canada practice their English and making friends. The preaching is sound, Christ-focused, and many of my new church friends have a spiritual maturity, and a missions attitude that makes me feel like I'm really among my own kind!

At times I wondered what has become of my passion for soul-winning. Then I realized that as I have matured in my Christian walk, and discovered the importance of discipleship and growth in spiritual things, my concern has grown for others, not only that they be saved, but that they be taught and mentored, or disciplined, in the Christian life.

From web design, (especially in SBI) and Attraction Marketing webinars, I learned that we must bring passion and enthusiasm to our business site, or we won't persuade anyone to believe or buy what we are recommending.

Chapter 9

A Whole New Business Career



2018-2019. Yes, more changes have come into my life. Big enough changes to call for another chapter in this testimony of God's work in and through me.

A latent desire has come to the fore in me to take advantage of online opportunities to make money so that I can help out these poor ministries and friends. By helping others who are preaching the gospel and winning souls in many corners of the world, and some who are discipling and training others in the Word, I can accomplish far more than if I alone am a witness in day-to-day contacts. Not that I want to avoid personal witnessing when a chance arises, but now I see a world-wide, multifaceted ministry horizon.

Chronologically, I'm a senior now, and my body is not up to the rigours of a pioneer missionary roughing it in a foreign land, yet I feel that the Lord is preparing me for a broader role as a sponsor and funder of these things.

Writing and publishing of books still calls to me. I have ideas for sequels to my novel and several other book themes, but at present I've set that aside. If the Lord opens that door and arranges my schedule so that I have time for it, then I will enter with an eager and bounding step.

Back in 2013 I reached 65. Checking it out I discovered that though I had only paid into the Canada Pension plan a few years, I would make more money if I declared myself "retired" than I did from my missionary supporters. Also, I did not have to quit working to apply for that pension. I certainly didn't want to quit working! What's more, I was confident I could trust the Lord for my needs over and above the pension and Old Age Security checks.

I still had one faithful and regular client. I just felt optimistic in Christ.

All this meant that I could resign as missionary, and go back on volunteer status with Western Tract Mission. That meant I could become a Board member again, which really helped out as sometimes we didn't have enough present at a Board meeting to have a quorum for any official business.

The same night that I turned in my resignation, it was accepted and I was promptly made a Board member once more. We also had some younger 'under 35' Millennials come to observe and see whether they would be willing to become Board members too. Long story short: five of them did!

Gradually their influence was felt as we changed the name of our mission to Impact Canada Ministries, and spent time reassessing our mandate from the Lord. In July of 2015 we decided as a Board to halt a number of things we had been doing and concentrate on what new things God wanted to do through us.

That meant that in one evening all but two of my roles in the mission were eliminated. I was still Secretary of the Board, and I was to continue with my assignment to write the mission's history for our 75th anniversary in 2016.

I moved my office home at the end of July to concentrate on the book, and my own self-supporting projects.

However, the research included typing up old Minutes and Reports from earlier eras before computers, so it took longer than I'd first imagined.

What is more, in 2016 we were busy selling our old building and moving into a new office. So we put off our anniversary celebration until 2017. I managed to get that big, hefty history book done in time for our celebration on October 13, of that year. By the summer already I had to sacrifice a lot of my personal time to see the book was done and printed in time for our big event.

I gave myself another project after that; one of sorting and putting all the old photos we had found into new albums with page protectors for each sheet of photos. That took a number of months too!

Throughout all this time, for more than two years, I had been reading and hearing through Webinars about online businesses and something called Attraction Marketing. I saw tremendous potential in this for raising large sums of money. Deep in my heart I had always wished I could support missionaries and missions in a big and generous way. This became a new passion in my heart and whole being. It seemed that God had prepared me for such work in my latter years. Something I could do from home, working alone, or eventually training others so that more can benefit.

I had already taught myself to build websites, mainly for affiliate marketing, but this was a whole new grasp of how to make my marketing more effective and profitable.

Many of my friends and contacts in third-world countries have great difficulty raising funds for their ministries and good works. I really want to help them out too! Their needs are so great, that I can hardly wait.

Still, I could see that once I threw myself into this new business for a giving ministry I would not have time for these last projects for the mission, and some that I had taken on as favours for people in need. I decided to push hard to wrap up those projects first; then I would throw myself just as heartily into the new career of an online business entrepreneur.

There is definitely a place for all my content-writing, layout/editorial skills, graphic design, website design, creativity, resourcefulness, and people skills I learned in the last two decades - in this new period in my life.

I continue, by prayer, to involve the Lord in everything I do all day long.

My passion to help other people is still uppermost. Now I will help them to succeed in online businesses of their own, all the while watching for opportunities to introduce Christ; and when they receive Him, to show them how to live by Biblical principles. Plus, I get to be a Giver like God!

Obviously, there will need to be another chapter inserted here after I have been doing this for a while. At the moment, this brings my story to the Present day.

Chapter 10

Dear Reader!



Dear Spiritually Hungry Reader,

Are you thinking right now, "Oh, how I would love to know God like that, always listening, always near, and encouraging me, guiding me!"?

Dear Reader, I would love to throw my arms around you and assure you that yes, you CAN know God intimately like that! Since we are not in the same place right now, let me explain how you can come into such close fellowship with God, for He desires it far more than you do, and He has been waiting for you!

1. You must humbly come to God on His terms. You need to recognize and admit that you are a sinful person and have no standing before a holy, awesome God. He has plainly said, "*There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*" (Romans 3:10-12)

1. So confess all your sins to God. That is, agree that they are a serious affront to Him, but that He is able to wipe them out. Grieve with remorse that you committed those sins. Then, move on to the next step.

2. Receive gladly by faith that God has already provided for your salvation and holiness through the gift of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross to purchase your complete forgiveness of all your sins, and binding habits. By believing Jesus died and rose for YOU specifically (as well as the whole world), you are adopted into God's Great Big Wonderful Family! You become a member of Christ's Body, the Church universal, which is known in the Bible as the Bride of Christ.

You also receive the Holy Spirit of God to dwell in your heart and to be God's presence in you. If you want all that, just tell God this in prayer, and joyfully thank Him for His gifts!

The pages of Romans in the Bible have a lot more on this topic, but some key verses that summarize this are, "*But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5:8) And "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23)

There is so much to learn and understand that is exciting and life-changing, so you should start reading the Bible and praying daily. Besides that, look for a good Bible-believing church, and make new friends there. Talk with others about these things in Bible classes and learn to understand more of what you have in Christ. Don't try to be a believer all by yourself (unless you are marooned alone on an island, or in a solitary prison cell). Just as a coal or log taken out of the fire soon grows cold and loses its glow, so a Christian that is all on her own, will find it hard to stay close to the Lord.

Dear Christian Reader,

if you are already a Believer, but your reaction to my testimony is - "how come I don't feel that close relationship with Christ, or not very often?" - I want to greet you warmly too, and show you that you can still get there as well!

First of all, did you miss any of the steps above? Have you thoroughly and completely repented of your sins, or are you still clutching a few - like a child with a toy you won't give up? Not being fully repentant and surrendered to God is a huge barrier to intimacy with Him.

Or, have you failed to get into the Bible and hungrily read it as your daily spiritual food? Your Bible should be your most priceless treasure. It's not just a possession. It represents our Living God. It is where He interacts with us, and speaks with us!

If you skip too many days of Bible reading and meditation, you are spiritually starved. Please make time for that - and start telling the Lord everything. Ask Him questions. Ask Him for what you need. Then things will start to change in your life, and you will draw closer to Him. God never forces Himself upon us; He only gives us as much of Himself as we are ready and willing to have.

What about going to church and spending quality time with other believers? As much as possible you should find other Christians and spend time with them. That will make your spirit soar! Learn to get along with them - that's part of growing up spiritually too!

Now, Dear Growing Christian Reader,

if you have this inner longing to share what you have in Christ with others - even if you feel you are not doing well at it, take heart! God is watching over you like a proud parent, watching you take your first steps.

Some people seem to have the personality and gifts to be outgoing and articulate right from their first tries, and they succeed in leading others to the Lord quickly. Some of us are slow learners and it takes us longer.

If you are a true believer, you have the Holy Spirit abiding in you, and it is HE that is giving you that desire and longing to share the gospel. Don't give up and turn away because you were nervous or tense when you first tried.

But do focus more on learning to know and understand all that you have in Christ and to walk with Him, and let Jesus bring improvements to your life that are in keeping with your personality and gifts. Don't try to "be just like someone else," in spreading the gospel. God has made you in your particular way because He has a tremendous plan for using you in ways that are different from others. The more you learn to love and obey His Word, the easier the witnessing will flow from you. The right words will just bubble up out of you at the right time, when you meet someone who needs to hear your testimony, and your experiences with the Lord. Naturally, you want to learn not to talk only of yourself, but to show them how they may have such joy and peace and forgiveness too.

Maybe I can summarize it this way, see that you grow in your own devotion to the Lord, and let it show unashamedly. That will make you like salt and light which will attract others, and then just think about pouring Christ's love out on them. A small amount of nervousness helps us to be sharp and on our toes so we do a good job, but if our fears tie us in knots, that is a sign that we are not looking to Jesus, but ourselves. Deal with that issue in prayer and make a decision to trust the Lord to help you.

Remember, this is not something we do for the Lord. It is something He wants to do through us, using our personality, our words, our love for the other person. Let's not hinder Him!

My Triumphant Psalm of Devotion and Faith!

I praise You, Lord God, for designing me and planning my family and life. You brought me to Yourself at an early age, and have wooed and won my complete devotion. I long waited for another, thinking that would be Your way of blessing and using me, but You patiently taught me, and waited until I chose to give You my whole heart.

You are my most holy and perfect God, Redeemer, Teacher, Guide, Comforter and Companion. I marvel at the love and tender provisions, and Your precious presence that I experience when I keep my focus on You. You love me better and more than anyone else could! I am weened of wanting others.

Much as You love me, I know You are ready and eager to love others too. It pleases You greatly if I bring others to repentance, and faith, and fellowship in Christ Jesus. Therefore, I am also passionate about sharing You, dear Jesus, with individuals and groups, and with everyone in every corner of the world! That is why I love missions.

I believe You are eternal, having always existed, always been holy and flawless, and You always will remain. You are the Creator and Founder of the whole universe, and all the universes - if there are more! You are also my Saviour, my Sanctifier, my Healer, and my Soon Coming King! You, O God, have a passion for human souls and long to be in sweet fellowship with each one of us! Everyone throughout the history of time! It boggles my mind, but yes, EVERYONE!

I believe You have a specific plan for my life, and that it is good - the more I see of it, the better I like it! I can trust You with an utter abandon. Even though I should have no home or income, and ill health, I trust You and Your plan to triumph. You WILL carry me through, and bring me to a bright and spacious place! You also fill my lap with good things until it overflows, but all of this is so that I may be Your faithful servant and part of Your Body the Church, and thus working toward Your ultimate goals of saving mankind.

Some day soon, You, Lord Jesus, will personally come to collect Your Church, (Your Bride, according to Jewish custom), and take us to the Father's House for that great wedding feast, and we shall be spotless and without wrinkle or blemish of any kind! Hallelujah! Then I shall truly be Home and be Perfect at last. Amen.

How to Reach Me

My Address is: 903 23rd Street West, Saskatoon, SK. S7L 0A5 Canada.

My phone number is: 306-956-7785

(However, if I get robo or other unsolicited calls trying to sell or deceive me, my policy is to hang up and then immediately report it to a tracing service).

My **Email Policy** for many years now has be NOT to publish my email addresses openly. I know that spammers have ways and means of harvesting them and selling them to other spammers. All of them merely increase the dumps of junk emails.

Instead I recommend you find one of my websites (Google will help) and look for the contact form. Send me a note that way with some indication of who you are and what your concern or interest is that would connect you with me. I generally get those email messages without fail, and if you have entered your own email address or contact information – if you seem sincere and believable, I will reach out to you.

Of course, you could always subscribe to one of my mailing lists, and there I do give out how to reach me more quickly.

I recommend my **RoseBouquet** (for friends) – where I share what is going on in my life. <https://blogs.ruthes-secreatroses.com/subscribe-to-the-ezine-editions/>

and/or my **eAction LIST** – (for business training and advice)
<https://bouquetofenterprises.biz/1/eAction-LIST-signup.shtml>