

Testimony

Mertia Warkentin Tells Her Story

I was born March 12, 1942 in Edmonton, Alberta, the fourth child of a poor farming couple. For eight months my father took his push-button accordion and played me to sleep every night! He bequeathed to me a lifelong love of music. Then he passed away of rheumatic fever. He left no will so the trustees auctioned off almost everything except a Gerard Heintzman piano, a Holstein cow, a table and chair set and our clothes.

In 1944 we moved to Fort St. John to live on our Granny's farm. She loved the Lord and she taught me to pray.

We attended the Alliance Church in Fort St. John where I heard how my sins separated me from a Holy God who loves me so. I heard how only Jesus, God's sinless Son, could live a perfect life and, by dying on the cross, take my punishment. This knowledge and the Holy Spirit's conviction of my sin grew as I did.

In 1953 I was drawn to a quartet which came to sing at our church. When the speaker told us that all unrepentant people would be cast into hell . . . it was like a was standing at the edge of a deep chasm looking into hell. I asked Jesus to forgive me, wash all my sins away and live in my heart forever, and He did just that! His love-letter to me has become my precious lifeline into His presence through prayer.

In 1960-61 I was earnestly praying about a life partner just before my final exams at UBC and that night God gave me a vivid dream that I walked into my home in Fort St. John to find Harvey Hamm waiting to welcome me! In this dream was the "knowing" that he would be my mate. When I arrived home it was like I had walked into my dream.

I became a teacher and in 1961-62 taught in Fort Nelson. Our love for each other grew until on July 21, 1962 we were married and started walking together with our Lord. This verse appeared in so many of our cards, it became our verse. "The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord and He turns it whither soever He wills."

Harvey taught in Fort St. John at the high school for fifteen years and then at the elementary level for about fifteen more. Besides training our four children, I enjoyed organizing Child Evangelism Clubs in the area, teaching Sunday School and Pioneer Girls. We also served as a family at the Buick Creek Comm. Church from 1971-73.

My dear husband struggled with multiple myeloma for several years and our Lord took him home on October 17, 2006. It was like someone had cut half my being away. I was numb. Time seemed to stand still. I knew intellectually the Lord's Presence, but nothing seemed real, somehow I felt to alone. "Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence Him; with these alone He shares the secrets of His promises." Psalm 25:14 became dear to my heart.

On the farm, after shovelling myself out of hip-high snow, I came to my senses and said, "This isn't for me anymore." From then on I went south to spend the next two winters with a sick friend.

In 2008 Albert Warkentin, who is my widowed cousin-by-marriage and I started emailing each other. I felt he's understand the pain and loneliness I was experiencing. He did. We related on a more and more intimate level until we met in November 2008. On Valentine's Day 2009 Albert asked for my hand in marriage. I said "Yes!". We were married on April 11, 2009. The Lord has given us such great joy in sharing our devotions and our families with each other. God is so good and we rejoice in Him!! With the rapture just around the corner, the best is yet to come.

"We shall all be changed - we will be with the LORD!"

. *Gleaned from The Bridge - May 2023*