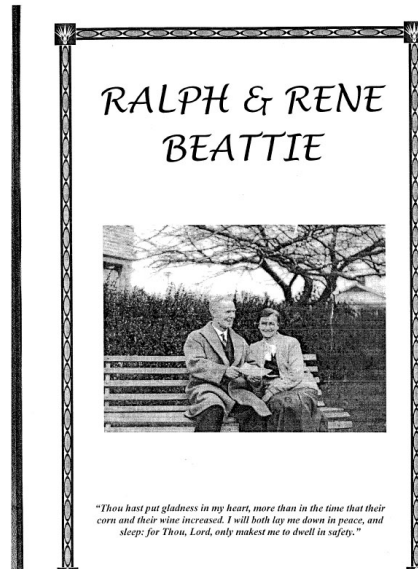


The Story of Ralph and Rene Beattie

Ralph and Rene Beattie Story

A Married Worker Couple

Published 2001 by Daughter Esther Gibson and son Joseph Beattie



RALPH AND RENE BEATTIE

David Beattie and his wife Christian, along with their family of 11 children, Ralph being the youngest, left Kilmur Scotland, by sea for Tasmania, arriving in May 1884, where 5 more children were born. The farm that had been allocated to the family as new settlers, was in Springfield. Nearby lived



the Lester family, which fact destined Ralph Beattie and Amy Constance Irene Lester to walk to school together, and later to fall in love, and marry. The mother Christian died in 1880 and the large family was brought up by the elder sisters.

In the year 1905 one Irish lady Annie Smith, felt the desire to leave her home in County Wicklow, Ireland, and go wherever she was needed to labour with the gospel of Jesus Christ. She, along with Fanny Carroll, arrived in New Zealand in October 1905. They laboured in Otago until after the conversions early in 1908, when Annie went to Tasmania. Although details of those early days are uncertain, what is known, is that after joining with Ada Cousins in Melbourne in July 1908, they worked a mission in the backwoods of north eastern Tasmania. Can we imagine the situation? The spirit of God moves the heart of a young woman to leave her land and people, and go, relying entirely on her faith in God, to the bottom of the other side of the world where she likely would have known not one soul!



5 years later on May 2 1910, aboard boat on her way home for a visit, Annie wrote these words in a letter: "True salvation is being brought to know God and allowing Him to work in you day by day. It's not a matter of how much we know in our heads, but how much true heart purpose that He is able to beget

in us daily to live for, and please Him". 48 years later in 1954 our Father and Mother, Ralph and Rene Beattie were in a fellowship meeting in Tasmania, and in his Bible Dad records ----"Mission worked Springfield July 1909 by Annie Smith and Ada Cousins. 20 professed, 7 died in the faith, 6 turned back and 7 still continue, of whom 6 were in the meeting today".

The 14 who professed and continued were ----Herbert and Mrs Briggs + Mrs Hilda Briggs and sons Arthur and Charlie + Horace and Mrs Hingston + Clyde and Mrs Lester + Mrs Montgomery + Effie Wright + Oliver Beattie + Ralph and Rene Beattie.

Of this time, Don Briggs, many years later, composed this below.....

Past the Brigg's farm gate one day, two ladies walking on their way,
Between them strapped to bush bikes were an organ, cases, all their gear;
I guess they were not travelling fast for Charlie saw them as they passed.
He put down his potato hoe and stood to watch where they would go.
Heading for the Springfield Hall, coming with the Gospel call.
(They'd come from out Nabowla way where Burgoons made a start one day)
Soon they rode out far and near, asking all to come and hear!
Some asked them in for cups of tea, and said that they would come and see.
People walking down the road--buggies, jinkers with a load
Heading for the Springfield Hall, came to hear the Gospel's call.
The hall was full ere lamps were lit, and all the people could not fit!
Across the road to Springfield School to gather chair and plank and stool.
Planks and seats but not for all, the young men stood around the wall!
Some still stayed out in the night, would not come in and "see the light".
People people by the dozens heard Annie Smith and Ada Cousins.
And they kept on coming too, and listened all the mission through.
Since then, eighty years have passed, old one's memories failing fast.
Others too not quite so old forget so much they have been told.

Oliver Beattie, our father's brother, laboured in the harvest field for just three and a half years, preaching in Queensland, until 1921. While preaching in Proserpine along with Nestor Ferguson, they were working two missions at places some distance apart, and it was necessary to cycle the miles between. Floods were occurring, and they had to ford the flooded rivers. On one occasion Oliver had the flu, and following a drowning in one of the fords he caught dengue fever, which turned to pneumonia. He was confined in hospital, and in his delirium he was singing.....

"Tis better than thousands of silver and gold,
More precious than rubies can be
To sit at the feet of my Master divine
And hear when He speaketh to me".

In this case, the speaking turned out to be the home call.

2



The next day Nestor wrote a very touching letter to John Sullivan telling of Oliver's death and burial. As there were no friends in the area, he was buried by the gravedigger and Nestor, alone. "There was only a sulky with two young women and myself on horseback, following the hearse". Just as they were lowering the casket some of the friends, including Mr Jim Harris, arrived from Proserpine. They had been bogged three times for two hours each time, hence their lateness.

This was a very hard experience for Nestor to face alone, and he also wrote, "Riding back to the tents (obviously where they had been staying) with nobody about to hear me, I wept as I never thought possible. I had learned to love this true hearted man who had left an inheritance to go to preach, and it was hard to part with him after just a few weeks. He rang as true as steel to the finish, and I would gladly have yielded up my spirit this morning if the Lord had given me my choice." The Harris family heard the gospel through Oliver some time before.

Our father and mother were married on April 2 1907. The Government in those days would allocate to suitable applicants a piece of virgin gum bush covered land. These areas were termed 'My Selection'. The land allocated to Dad and Mum was in an area called Springfield. Dad was a well experienced oxman, having completed for years in wood chopping events, and so was well prepared for the task ahead. He clear felled a small area splitting the logs into rough hewn boards, and built a home for his bride on 'Their Selection', which they named "Okehampton". From that start, the felling and burning of the gums continued, with grass seed



sown in the ashes on the new ground, the pasture forming, and development of the farm continuing. Reflecting back on their lives, and referring to these days on their 25th wedding anniversary, a poem Mum wrote at that time contained these sweet little verses---



OUR HOME

Together as we meditate we view the past,
And o'er our hearts and minds a sacred spell is cast,
The years have come and gone, just twenty five today,
Two lives made one, then to our little home we made our way.

"We loved that little home, we loved it well
And laboured there together, nor wished to sell
Nor wished to roam, why should we roam?
Our purpose then was just to have a Happy Home."

The scene is changed, no longer there we dwell,
The ocean rolls between us and that spot we loved so well.
What made the change? 'twas this, the Lord stepped in
And showed us that our lives, our home, our all, belonged to Him.

He won our hearts, we could not say Him nay
As calling us to preach He opened up the way.
Now we find joy in seeking souls to save,
The sacrifice is sweet our home is sure, beyond the grave.

Written on their 25th wedding anniversary, April 2 1932.

4

On October 3 1909, their son Archie Beattie was born, and shortly after that, this seed was sown in their mind, and to put it in their words, "If we could bring to one other and the happiness that the gospel has brought to us, it would be worth our whole lives". And in Dad's words "If I could go and find 10 men better than myself for God's kingdom, I would die happy". And so the decision was made, and made known to William Irvine who gave it his blessing, but with this condition, "that you leave your son behind". Mum's brother Clyde Lester and his wife offered to take responsibility for Archie. And so, with farm, home, and goods including Mum's piano, disposed of, and 18 month old Archie left behind, on 23rd of May, 1911, they launched forth into God's harvest field. Twelve years later Mum penned these verses.

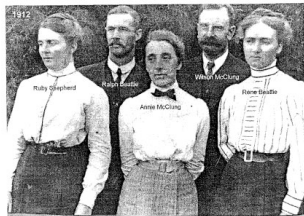


"Twenty-third of May", twelve years today
Since we left our little Home and sailed away.
We will labour on till the journey's done,
We are glad we ever chose God's own true way.

"Twenty-third of May", twelve years today,
Think of honest hearts we've helped to win.
Wherefore should we fear to trust our Friend so dear,
We will labour on, and bring the Wanderers in.

Dad joined Wilson McClung and Mum joined Annie (Wilson's wife) in Victoria, Australia, on June 19, 1911. Each pair worked a number of missions that year in Melbourne suburbs, Mitcham, South Warrandyte, Templestowe, Korringle, Essendon and Coburg before attending conventions in Tasmania and Victoria. The next year Mum and Dad preached together in a tent again in Melbourne, at East Doncaster, a hall in Black Rock, a home in Clayton, a

hall in Springvale and Noble Park, a tent in Dandenong, with Chris Williams in Cheltenham, and at Bentleigh again in a tent.



In 1913 Mum and Dad were together again in Melbourne, working Marunbera, Ormond, Sandringham, Brighton, Gardenvale, and then to Flinders Island for four months until conventions in Victoria, in April 1914. While on Flinders Island they were walking some distance over the island and dusk was approaching, as was the question of where they would sleep. They saw a light in the distance, and when nearer, they saw the family having dinner. They knocked on the door and asked could they doss down in the hay shed? The lady said, "Come in", and she gave them dinner and a bed for the night. Mum often said that she felt the nicest words in the English language were those words "come in", and especially too, as on that occasion the "come in" also invited God, into their home and their lives.

Then missions at Ulverstone, Gawler, Gunne Plains, North Motton, Alboortsham, Forth, Kindred and Sprent in 1915, followed by Conventions in Victoria and South Australia. Our sister Jean Ruth was born in Tasmania January 27 1915, and she remained with them.

With companion John Wilson, 1915 year commenced with missions in South Australia, at the Islington Railway Workshops where they received permission to preach to the rough bunch of working men during their lunch hour. Then Enfield, Edwardstown, Salisbury and Willaston. Then visit to Tasmania where Dad and Mum preached together again in Prospect, Roseworthy and Temples. Conventions 1916, and then with Willie Wutke in South Australia.

6

Tent missions in Kilkenny, Hindmarsh, Thebarton, Mile End, and with Maud Kerns in Torrensville, Henley Beach, and Lockleys.

Conventions and then 1917 with Syd Maynard in South Australia. Mission in Parkside, then May 2 1917 Mum and Dad with baby Jean, tent missions began again in Adelaide suburbs at Unley. Good response here, so continued for a long time for those days, two months and then to Forestville, South Terrace and Ovingham.



Many years ago while I was in Adelaide, Nelson Retchford's sister, (whose name eludes me) was chatting with me, and responding to my question as to whom she had professed through, said, "Oh I professed through Ralph and Rene and Jean Beattie! I asked why she mentioned Jean, who would have been still about three years old? Her answer was, in essence, that Dad had Jean on the bicycle carrier as he was knocking on doors and riving people to come to the tent mission and hear the gospel of good news, and she was so impressed with the sight of Jean being on the carrier, that she always included her in with her parents, as those who brought her the gospel that changed her life! Through her childhood, Jean attended no less than 28 different schools, either 21, and only 13 for Joseph!

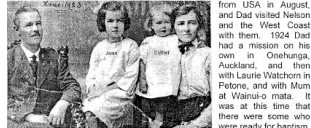
Then conventions 1918. Missions again in northern South Australia, Solomontown, Port Pirie West, Snowtown, Port Pirie, Peterborough, Jamestown, and then conventions in February 1919. Then in Yaninee and Adelaide with Syd Maynard for a time, followed by Murry Bridge. Then with Ern Purke at Port Lincoln, Pointside, White River and Tod River where they lived in the meeting tent, along with Mum and Jean. 1920 Conventions then, in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. This was followed by two weeks meetings in Sydney, which in turn was followed by a request for them to come and labour in New Zealand.

7

Upon arrival in Wellington on April 8 1920, they were taken to the home of Mr and Mrs James Smith. Mum's comment at the time was "Mr Smith was a TALL, white haired policeman, whose wife was also white haired and spotlessly clean. Her words—"I had never seen such a sight—snow white bed cover, and snow white stiffly starched sheets and most beautifully ironed pillow shams." From there they went to Temuka in Canterbury, to the home of Mr and Mrs Sam Gray. Our sister Jean was then 5 years and 3 months.

Mum and Dad began meetings in Temuka, followed by Winchester, Orai, Timaru, and Timaru West, these followed by convention at Avondale Jan. 27 1921. Some time was then spent in Petone and Christchurch, Auckland and Wairarapa, before commencing missions in Christchurch at Papanui, Dean and Kilmore Streets with Jim Graves, and then Laurie Plews. In the period between arrival in New Zealand and conventions 1922, God added his blessing to their sacrifice, in this, that in 8 of the 9 missions held, some "abode to their feet and indicated their willingness to serve and love Jesus Christ their Saviour" (Dad's words.) 1922, with Harry Rankin—Papanui, Herford St, Gloucester St, and then Ruskin St, with Bert McMurray. On April 21 daughter Esther Amy was born.

1923 tent missions again in Christchurch with Bob Stockdill at Sydenham, Grafton St, New Brighton, and Riccarton Workshops. Joe and Grace Brown (nee Pridou - Grace heard the Truth through Mum and Dad) were visiting NZ from USA in August, and Dad visited Nelson and the West Coast with them. 1924 Dad had a mission on his own in Otehunga, Auckland, and then with Laurie Watchorn in Petone, and with Mum at Waiata-o mata. It was at this time that there were some who



and Mr and Mrs Henry Rock had their home in Nelson St. Just a few yards down at the bottom of the street was Petone Beach, so Dad took the opportunity to make use of the beach, and carried on with the baptisms there. Some time afterward Jim and Beryl Ludlam's mother Lily, was asked this question at her workplace, "Lily what were you doing down at the beach yesterday with that crowd of mad 'Gipsies'? What was going on?" (Doubtless a great opportunity for her to give her testimony!)

Then missions continued with Charlie Woodard in Wellington at Brooklyn, Mornington and Cuba Street until Convention at Avondale, followed by an invitation for Mum and Dad to attend conventions in South Australia, Victoria and then Tasmania. They returned to New Zealand, and brought with them their son Archie, which made the family together, five. With Fred Lewis and the tent again in Wellington at Newtown, Constable St., Melrose hall and tent

8

in Kilmorie and Adelaide Road. Conventions at Maitven and Waiakanae. 1928 with Dave Dawson and tent in Taranaki St Thorndon, Korokoro and Wadestown schools, and then with Sam Lang in Kaiwarawara and Lower Hutt. With Fred Deering in 1927, in Wanganui, tent in Dublin Street, Wanganui East, Glasgow Street and Gonville as well as the Railway Workshops and the Woolen Mills, presiding to the staff in their lunch hour.

1928 was Willie Phyn's first year labouring, and he joined Dad and Mum with the tent in South Dunedin. They also had some time in Balclutha, and then with Colin McKelrod at Caversham, Dunedin. 1929 began with Colin again and then Jim Lewis, and later in Pinces St with Jack Mills in St Andrews St, and North East Valley. 1930 with Lex Morinich in Oamaru, tent missions, Western and Ardgowan halls, and Mr Archie Morris's home. Son Joseph Clyde was born on February 28. Four tent missions were worked in Timaru

On the twenty-third of May
Twenty years ago today
Cutting every bridge behind
We went forth lost souls to find.

Sore our hearts and lonely too
As we came to bid adieu,
To the friends we loved so well
None on earth could ever tell.

But the Lord Himself drew near
Speaking words of hope and cheer,
"If thou wilt sow thy life as seed
I will guide to souls in need.

Though some tests we've had to face
Through it all His love we trace,
And our confidence today
Is deeper, firmer in His Way.

Some are now at home in heaven,
To us, through the Gospel given.
And though I still means "Sow in tears",
We'd serve another twenty years.

Written 23-5-31

With Ernie Bush in 1931 in Timaru, when God won the hearts of Jim and Bertha Thompson. An especial loving relationship developed between Ralph and Rene and Jim and Bertha, and both their families, which has lasted throughout both their lives, and to this day. The following happening will serve to illustrate the kindness engendered by the love for God and His kingdom in people's hearts, and showered freely upon us as a family, that enabled God to use Dad and Mum so fruitfully throughout their lifetime.

9

In 1941 we were to go to Christchurch, and as the world war was on, very few houses were being built, and consequently were very difficult to rent. So, a group of friends decided that they would build a small cottage for us to live in, and the Thompsons offered their back lawn as the place where it could be built. We used their conveniences, their kitchen, their sitting room and their piano just as if they were our own. This story was repeated over and over again in various places, circumstances, and situations, by God's children wishing to show their love, support, and willingness to be practically associated with the homeless ministry in a multitude of different ways, and which always involved for such, inconvenience, self denial, and sacrifice.

Wellington with Tom Graham for 5 tent missions in 1932. Coutts Street, Freyberg Street, Seatoun, Miramar, and Hataitai and 4 again in Wellington 1933, Berhampore, Island Bay, Adelaide Road, and Tinsford Road and after 5 conventions, again in 1934 with Charlie Addington first, and then Cecil Barnett in Brooklyn and Willis Street. Conventions in NZ and then Dad was asked to go to Australia for 10 conventions there. He arrived back in late April 1935 for 3 missions in Petone and Lower Hutt until conventions at Ngaree, Te Rapa and Masterton. 1936, tent in Cuba St. and Petone and homes in Moera, Johnsonville with Melville Vallance.



1937 to Dunedin with Jack Copp for missions in Kaitiori, Highgate, Elgin Street and Main 188, and after conventions 1938 with Charlie Barbour in Musselborough, Anderson Bay, St Kilda and Caversham. 1939 for 3 missions in Christchurch with Ian Reid, Hebron Hall and then tent in Papanui, Colombo St and Sydenham. 1940 again in Christchurch, with Paul Giffin for 4 missions in Hebron Hall, Papanui, Colombo St and Sydenham. 1941 Christchurch again with Melville Vallance in Rolleston Hall, then tent in Lyttelton Street, St. Martins Road, Rolleston, and then to conventions at Mitiwaka and Te Rapa.

In February 1939 we were living with Matt and Jack Crockett in their home attached to their shop in Hereford Street, Christchurch. I came home from school and walked in to the bottom of the stairs, where I found Matt cradling in her arms my mother, sobbing and wracked with grief. She had just read in the paper the report of a motor accident in Wellington in which her son Archie had been killed outright. The thought of the son they had left for the gospel's sake dying so young was unbearable. Her grief is best expressed in the poem she wrote in that experience.....

10

At my Saviour's feet, humble quiet and still,
Fearing lest my heart should resist His will.
At my Saviour's feet, though my heart is sore,
In this darkest hour, I will trust Him more.
He doth understand, He alone can see,
How my faith is tried, as He deals with me.
May thy dealings, Lord work that good in me,
Sympathy for those who may be burdened be.
At my Saviour's feet, comfort sweet is mine,
Now my heart can say not my will, but Thine.

During 1941 while we were staying with Mr & Mrs Rundle one event was clearly etched in my 11-year-old mind. Melville Vallance, who all his life battled with a severe inferiority complex, was washing the dishes while Mum dried them and I put them away. Melville was quietly washing, with the tears from his eyes dropping into the sink when he said: "Rene, I can't go on, I am neither able nor worthy to carry the gospel story." Mum put her arms around him, gave him a kiss and said "Melville if you go home, how will Ralph and I carry on? We need you, we need you, and you are vital to God's work." He heard, and took courage. The dear man bravely fought with that nature until his dying day. Mr Rundle passed away while we were there with them. 1942 commenced with Arthur Lomas in Oamaru, Wainakuru, Kia Ora School, Jim & Bertha Thompson's home, Peter Pan and Foresters Halls, and then Mr W. Greens home in Redston, Totara and Maheno and Pukekohe and then Palmerston South halls. Due, I presume, to the war, there were no conventions this year, and special meetings in Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Timaru and Blenheim sufficed.

God's Way and Work on the Earth.

I met a little lady and I loved her right away.
She told me that she knew not God, she knew not how to pray.
I told her of the God we love, and how He sought us out
And lifted from our hearts a load, of sin and fear and doubt.

I felt a joy surge through my heart, as I left her at her door
And prayed she would come to our Hall, that we could tell her more.
Why such a joy within in my heart as along the street I trod?
'Twas because this love which moved me on was truly born of God.

I read this precious Book of God from Genesis right through,
Of Noah, Moses, Abraham, Ruth, Hannah and Esther too

11

Whose lives, along with many more, inspire my soul within
That I would sacrifice and serve, some other soul to win.

Of Jesus moved by love divine, He came from Heaven above
To suffer, yes, He lived and died, to show to men God's love.
And now for over forty years, in fact 'tis forty one
The Lord has led us, and it seems, our work is not yet done.

Someone may be just waiting, someone who knows not God
Someone who knows not how to pray nor walk where Jesus trod.
We loved the lowly preachers who in love came to our door.
And of this love born in our hearts we'll sing for evermore.

1943, 1944, and 1945 were spent in Invercargill. An old friend Mr Wylie, had a co-operative business along with his son Tom. Tom and his wife Olive had recently had a home built in 44 Butler Street Walkiwai, and when they heard that we were coming to Invercargill, they vacated their fully furnished home so that our parents and their companion and I could live there. This we did for the full three years.

Our mother had said that apart from her baby son, the thing she found hardest to part with in the beginning, was her piano. She was a musical person, a poet and a hymn composer. Seven of her hymns are found in our book.

38 - This Question God Would Ask---
69 - Oh Seeking Soul---
71 - Preaching Yes Perishing---
78 - Hast Thou Ever Proved The Sweetness---
91 - My Wayward Heart ---
140 - The Saviour Now Is Seeking---
282 - His Way Is Best---

"Tasmania"
(Forty three years)
I sit musing in the sunshine
'Tis a still and pleasant day
O'er my heart there steals a sadness
As I ponder o'er my way,
Thoughts of childhood and of teenage
And how life is slipping by,
Of familiar scenes and faces
And loved ones far away.

We have loving friends around us
And our needs are all supplied,
And a batch to give us shelter
Where in peace we can abide
Paths of usefulness are offering
There seems much that we can do,
So while the Lord desires us here

12

To that trust we will be true.

There's much of interest to my heart
This small part of God's great earth
Is where I received my natural
And then my spiritual birth
'Was there a 'woman' with soul so dead
Who never to herself hath said
This is my own, my native land
My noblest effort it's demand."

About the land of our adoption
Fair New Zealand we love well,
More to us than tongue can tell,
Where we've laboured four and thirty years
'Mongst God's servants over there
In the wondrous work of winning souls
Our greatest joy to share.

Our heart is there--our heart is here---
We're in our Master's care.
We gave Him all, nought to withhold
His sacrifice to share.
And all through three and forty years
He has so kindly planned
And lead, and fed and cared for us,
We will leave all in His hand.

Give us more grace dear Lord we ask,
And all thy servants too,
Lest we should hold ought for ourselves
Nor to our vows be true.
Renew our vision this to see---
That we are not our own,
We are bringing in the sheaves of gold
To lay before Thy throne. 23-5-54.

Many years later, when I had married and had a family, I went to Invercargill and found Tom Wylie, by now a widower. He was working as a storeman in one of the warehouses there, and I was glad to be able to have a lengthy talk with him, and describe to him what a wonderful, God inspired, role he had been able to fill in enabling our parents to have what amounted to their own home, for a period, and to make him aware of Jesus promise "re the cup of cold water." And the piano was very often enjoyed by our mother and father in playing and singing together with their companions of those years, Jack Mills, Paul Griffin and Charlie Barbour. Jack was himself a wonderful pianist. Paul an excellent singer, and Charlie a very special person, and a great listener. Mr and Mrs Williamson and their two daughters Hazel and Jessie lived just round the corner, as did Harry and Sarah Helms and their family, all of whom loved

13

singing with us around the piano. 11 fruitful missions were worked in these three years in Invercargill.

I attended Southland Boys High School for those years, and in one way, wasted them fighting against God's claim on my life. Near the end of 1945 Dad and Mum had, as usual, gone to preparations at Masterton, and this year left me with Laurie and Irene Henderson as I had School Certificate exam to sit. These two had no children, but were young at heart, and showed a great deal of love and understanding and kindness to me at a tempestuous time in my youth. With them I spent many long evenings, talking over the issues of my will versus God's will, until I made up my mind to yield my heart to His claims. A while later, I went to stay with Walter and Ida Louise until Winchester conventions commenced. I had been the recipient of boundless kindness from old Mr and Mrs Lewis in earlier years, and then later Walter, in having my school holidays spent with them on a number of occasions.

Thirty six years on May twenty three
Since the Lord called us out His servants to be,
Through the clouds and the sunshine, the joy and the tears,
We still love His work after thirty-six years.

Thirty six years and we both still agree
'Tis a privilege tho' the least of His servants we be.
To seek on the mountains His sheep that are lost,
What matters the hardship, what matters the cost?

Thirty six years today, May twenty three
Fresh visions of service before us we see,
The remaining few years could perhaps be the best,
God knows all that is past, and so in Him we rest.

Thirty six years this May twenty three
And ought but the kindness of God can we see,
He's given a thousand times more than we've given
And he's promised we'll share in the Kingdom of Heaven.

After thirty six years we've crossed over the sea,
And travelled the old paths some true friends to see,
Some have passed onward, others still plodding on,
These urge us to labour 'till life's setting sun'.

Thirty six years this May twenty three,
What more can I say than I'm glad to be free
To continue the work that we still love to do
For "the harvest is great and the labourers are few."
Written 23-5-47.

14



1946 was Roy Price's first year preaching and he accompanied Dad and Mum in Napier. The next year, 1947, Dad and Mum visited Australia and Tasmania, attending 18 conventions in 6 states in 7 months, and finished the year with 2 missions in Hastings/Napier with Ted Steen. 1948 they worked Hawkes Bay together, with missions in Red Cross Hall, Wairoa Park Road and Maraekakaho, and together again in 1949, 7 missions in Hastings, and in 1950 again in Hawke's Bay North and Hastings. 1951, 1952 and 1953 Dad and Mum again together worked all over Christchurch with missions in 13 places.

1954 and 1955 Dad and Mum laboured in Launceston Tasmania, accompanied for a short while in late 55 by Jack Zanuck. 1956 Stratford and Ngaere in Taranaki with Victor Billings, and 1957 and 1958, with Bert Phillips in portable hall at Ngaere and Waitara, and in New Plymouth on Mr and Mrs Percy Rolfe's front lawn. Walking along the street in Waitara one day a gentleman accosted Dad, handed him a tract, and asked him if he had found Jesus yet? Dad's answer was thoroughly typical "I didn't realise he was lost!" During July and August, Dad, while speaking, would feel his heart having problems, and he would ask for a hymn to be sung while he took a tablet, and had a short rest before continuing. While at preparations he still had gospel meetings going in the portable hall at Ngaere, and in Mr & Mrs Oscar Wood's home in Stratford.

At the conclusion of that year 1958 they were asked to go to Winchester conventions, which incidentally, were held on the farm, which was referred to as the home of Mr and Mrs Sam Gray, and to which Dad and Mum went when they first arrived in New Zealand. Mum did not feel able to go, so Dad went without her. Near the end of convention he was standing at the dining shed door and someone asked him if he was alright. The answer—"Yes, I'm looking around to see if there is anyone I haven't spoken to!". Dad had laboured a lot

15

in the South Island, he was well known to everyone, besides having a very good memory, which made it easy for him to take a testimony meeting, and name the people waiting to speak, one by one. He knew them all. He had sung many times, as solos in meetings, such favourites of his as 'Love Goes All The Way' and 'Walking With The Lord'. And he did so at these conventions, and always proceeding them by saying 'there is not much virtue in the singing, but I hope you will be able to take in, and remember, the words'.



Following Winchester they came up to Ngaere, and Dad was to speak in the first meeting. Mary and I lived an hour's drive out in the country and even though this was to be our convention, we did not plan to go in that night. But my sister Jean rang us and asked were we coming in tonight? I said no. She refused to take no for an answer, and insisted that I go in. So, against my will I went. On arriving on the ground I looked for Dad and found him up at the house, in bed. He looked well, but said "I was supposed to be on tonight but I don't feel too bright, so Walter is going to speak instead, and I'll be on tomorrow night". So I had the meeting, and drove home. I had just got home and the phone rang. It was Walter Frank. He said "Is that you Joseph?—Yes, Walter is it?—Yes, Dad's gone.—Where to?—Home.—I said, What?— He's gone home.—What do you mean?—He is dead. I said, don't touch him, we'll be in as soon as we can." So there he was, just as I had seen him 3 hours before, living peacefully, the spirit gone and returned to the God that gave it. I can never be grateful enough for my sister Jean being 'a bit of a pain' that night. If she had not persisted, and insisted that I come, I would never have been, apart from Mum, the last one to see him alive. The funeral service was held in the tent, with several of the speakers, having laboured with him.

Paul Griffin.
To me it is a great privilege to have a little part in this service, I cannot recall just how many times I have been at funerals which Ralph has himself taken. One thing, I am not going to speak of him as a departed brother, but rather as one who is still with us in spirit. One of the apostles speaks of the whole family of God in heaven and in earth. So far as we are concerned it is an unbroken family—noting different than passing from one room to another. Death means nothing more than that. This thought encourages me as I think of our brother who has been such a wonderful ambassador for Christ. I suppose he has himself preached and spoken from these verses, even hundreds of times beseeching everyone he came in contact with, that they might be reconciled to God. We could have no greater example of zeal and sincerity than he gave to us. Hard now to find anyone amongst us with such zeal. He and his wife knew the experience of hearing the gospel message as we ourselves have heard, and as I heard it 30 years ago.

Forgetting the things that are behind, and looking forward to the things of the future: This parting is only for a short time until we all meet

16

before the judgment seat of Christ. That is the spirit that possessed our brother for the last 47 years. Knowing 'the terror of the Lord' he persuaded men in no uncertain way. He had courage to approach people even in the highest positions, unafraid. He met them and tried to persuade them of their lost condition, and what it would mean to them if they were willing to enter the kingdom of God. We have all seen caterpillars feeding in the gardens. At certain times they leave the plant and look for a dry place on the wall of the house to spin a cocoon. From that cocoon does not come a caterpillar, but a beautiful butterfly that goes soaring off into the sky. It is just a picture of the tabernacle we put off for the resurrection body. When He does appear we shall be like Him. We know our brother will awake with His likeness. He had a peace of love for every soul he came in touch with that they might know the peace of heart that comes with knowing Him. Ralph has been taken from us for a little while, only just entering another room in God's great kingdom.

Bert Phillips. As I was told last night about having a part in this service, I felt my weakness and unworthiness to speak about such a faithful brother who had so much zeal and trust and confidence in God. I am glad of the privilege of being his companion for the past two years here in Taranaki. 'Those at death in faith'—having seen the promises after death, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth'. It was Ralph's desire to spend his last days preaching the gospel. One of the last meetings he was in he mentioned that, and his wish has been granted. He often said that he would like to preach so that on the Judgment day nobody could hold him responsible for not making things clear and simple. I believe that nobody he preached to was left in any doubt as to the plan of God. His life greatly appealed to, and influenced me. The last mission we were in, looking back on it now, I believe he put forth even extra effort. I do not know whether he realised his days were coming to an end. Those who showed interest he left no stone unturned to help. His life has been a great influence on me, and I believe on this whole district. His last three years, and I want to be more faithful and loyal, and never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Tom Graham. I look upon this as a great privilege this afternoon. My associations with our brother Ralph go back over 30 years. He and Rene and another companion were preaching the gospel in Dunedin, not far from where I was living. When it was laid upon my heart to go forth into the harvest field, Ralph was the first one to whom I mentioned it. About three years after that I had the privilege of labouring with him and Rene in the city of Wellington. We were there with a tent, and had several sites that year, and as our two brothers have mentioned, his courage and zeal for the Lord's work was something that put a lasting impression on my life as I endeavoured to labour with him. I have often heard Ralph say at funerals that his desire was to so live now that those who spoke at his funeral would be able to say something about him that would encourage and help others at all times to do God's will. His one desire and purpose of heart was to live for the heavenly country, and that is what I would like the influence from his life to be upon my life.

Walter Frank. Deuteronomy 33 v 3 & 27. It is difficult for us to realise we will not hear the voice of our brother again here on this earth, his cheering words of comfort and all that his influence has meant to us down through the years. He and his faithful wife have laboured together in this great work of God. At the end of his faithful work of 47 years of service my thoughts have gone to all the homes that have gladly opened their doors, and gladly received them into their hearts, as well as their homes. Many a precious soul will be rejoicing that they ever came their way. 200 telegrams have been received from the friends in New Zealand alone—unknown, and yet so well known.

Like Enoch, Ralph was a man that walked with God until God took him. He never saw death because he walked home to heaven. The gospel that Ralph and Rene gave their lives for, removed the sting of death. I was called into the room when our brother passed away and I looked on the worn out face and body left behind. He forewent everything, and is so poor naturally today as when he started out to live for the gospel, but oh, so eternally rich. I know our dear brother would say today 'do not speak much about me this afternoon, but tell those dear souls to lay hold on those eternal riches I have been telling them about here on earth'. Ralph was with us last week down south and he sang that beautiful hymn 'Love goes all the way'. And he meant it.

The hand of God brought him here where he had his last mission in Taranaki, and near to his dear family, when he could have passed away down south. All things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to His purpose. I would love to think that this convention is going to stir us all to live for what Ralph and Rene have lived for.

Hymns— We shall not regret we laboured.
Only remembered by what we have done.

Following Dad's passing, our Mother came and lived close to Mary and I, in a flat we had for her for a few years, until we went and lived in Malaysia. During Mum's time in the flat, one evening Mary had prepared for me some pork to have on my lunch the following day. During the night the cat got up to mischief as Mum describes in the following few lines.

Alley Cats – Bally Cats
While Joey – (he's the dozer man)
And Mother – (she's the cook)
Were very peacefully sleeping –
Fluffy came and had a look.

He found the door would open
So he made a quick retreat
And gathered all the 'Alley Cats'
And brought them in to eat.

The cupboard doors were all ajar
Oh – this is grand and fine
He dragged the pork on to the floor
Come friends – we'll sit and dine.

He handed round the knucklebone
The cracking and the rest,
And what a jolly meal they had
Of our pork – the very best.

Now what about poor Joey
Planning sandwiches galore?
There's nothing left – but bones and skin
Strewed all around the floor.

Alley Cats – Bally Cats –
Don't dare come near my door.
I'll skin alive the lot of you
And make a nice mat for the floor.

Later on in the years of her failing health she was wonderfully cared for by Jean and Esther and their husbands, brothers Bill and Eric Gibson, and also their families. In December 1968 Eric and Esther were at Masterton, and while there, they called Jean to inquire how Mum was, and were told she was poorly, so they returned home in the evening of Dec-21 to be called to the Stratford hospital. Bill and Jean and Eric and Esther sat with her until she passed away on January 1 1969. The doctor who was attending her was a Brother, and before she went into hospital, he quoted to her Numbers 6, v 24-26—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee, and the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and give thee peace" and Mum passed away with these words on her lips — "The Lord, the Lord ——" her Saviour, and undoubtedly, her lifelong friend.

Year after year at convention, numbers of ladies would surround Mum at times convenient, for chatting. She was able, as no one else was, nor is, to answer their questions backed by experience, about marriage and bringing up children, and as well, living the life of a practising servant of God. Many this vast and quite unique experience, with the kind, and forgiving, and understanding nature that Mother displayed, and you may get some grasp of the reality that made my mother a person who was uniquely and universally beloved. The last time my sister Jean heard Dad pray in a meeting, he included words from the 4th Psalm, and these words so clearly symbolise Dad and Mum's lives.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.

OUR LIVES TOGETHER.

Walking to school *together*
Those happy childhood days
Then growing up *together*
Just enjoying youthful ways
Choosing to share life *together*
Prepared for all it might hold.
Quite sure we'd be happy *together*
That we'd not reach silver or gold.

Seeking life's pleasures *together*
Thinking to brighten our way.
Very soon we pondered *together*
How best can we spend life's short day?
Seemed strange, came two preachers *together*
Inviting us 'come to our hall'
Come and hear the gospel *together*
So we chose to obey their call

We sat in the meetings *together*
Our hearts were both moved by God's voice,
As we pondered their message *together*.
Together we made a great choice.
Could we answer the call to the harvest
Leaving home and all else that was dear?
Together we made the surrender
For the call to us both was so dear.

We've spent every year since *together*
In living and serving our God.
And guiding the weary and lost ones
To follow the path Jesus trod.
No longer we journey *together*
My dear one the prize first has won.
He would have me keep living and serving
Right on to my own 'Setting Sun'.

We face life's sore trials *together*
We bear them to others unknown,
We each take a share of the burden,
But this parting we must bear alone.
Our life's journey *together* is ended
But a heavenly vision I see,
If alone I stand true to my Saviour
In God's Kingdom *together* we'll be.

IN MEMORY OF RALPH, MY BELOVED HUSBAND AND COMPANION.
17-12-1968

Our dear mother passed peacefully away and was buried at Stratford on January 3 1969 - Hymn 254, Mum's composition "His Way Is Best."

Walter Frank.

This is a hymn that our dear sister composed. There are at least 6 other hymns that she composed that will ever be an inspiration to God's children. It is a rich hymn and I would urge you to read over it. She meant every word, and I know full well that she has learned down through the years that God's way is best, and she finished her journey in that way. Her influence has been an inspiration to me, and to us all, down through the years.

Revelation 14 v 12. Some of you here may be wondering "well what is the faith of this precious soul, that has inspired so many to be here today?" one who has lived behind the scenes as far as the world is concerned, but well known by the children of God. It was a wonderful day when these two in their young days heard the Gospel Story, and were moved to give their lives completely over to it, in all God's sincerity, after God's purpose was unfolded to them.

The blessedness of this dear soul who has died in Christ, is because of living in Christ, and we would like to die such a triumphant death as she has. Her children, and her children's children, will rise and call her blessed. "These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth" and "These were redeemed from men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb," and "they are without fault before the throne of God." And, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" And I said unto him "Sir thou knowest." And he said unto me "These are they that have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall not hunger any more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".

The day our dear precious sister has been living all her life for, has come.

Jack Phillips.

I am glad of the day I first met Ralph and Rene about 20 years ago at Masterton convention preparations, and I will remember the great interest they took in my young life. The reason they have been such a help to us over the years is because they knew the battles of life, and the battle to do the will of God, from every possible angle, and their appreciation of the unceasing struggles of people to do God's will. I would encourage everyone, young and old to live with the zeal that these two souls had.

Walter Frank.

I Corinthians 15:54-55 - It is just 10 years since we journeyed together following our sister's life partner to this resting place. Now we sorrow not as do others, because we have hope beyond the grave. This dear soul

has known the same as her husband—the quickening of the Spirit, of the Lord. Two bodies worn out in the service of God—that is all this grave is holding. Their spirits have returned to God who gave them. This chapter of 58 verses deals mainly with the resurrection life. What a wonderful thing the word of God is. The seed of Truth that gives a new life and a new nature. If heaven is going to be filled with Christlike people, it is because the Christlike spirit has filled the lives of men and women. It is not in man to direct his own steps. These dear souls have sacrificed their lives to make this gospel known to mankind.

There is a life after death, and eternity to face. This dear soul's body has gone forever. And eternity has just begun, and the "Bride of Christ" maketh herself ready, as Rene has done. I hope these precious things will touch our hearts and that you will realise you are listening to the truths that have taken away the sting of death for this dear soul. This mortal putting on immortality, because she has died to the sinful nature that could never fit her for eternity. We are very grateful to be able to tell you dear souls that there is a glorious triumph over death if man will only surrender his heart to Christ.

May God help us to lay to heart these precious things, and I would like to think not one soul would miss the purpose for which God has created us. "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord". It would be good if we could be steadfast and unmovable and always abounding as Ralph and Rene were, in the Lord's work in the church gatherings, preserving the tender lives amongst us. For some of us our days may not be many, but may God help and inspire us all.

FOR TOGETHER BY THEIR DAUGHTER EDVIGE COLEMAN AND THEIR SON JOSEPH, 2001