

THE ALBERTA YEARS

Edmonton

The next morning Dad brought us to the train station to begin our 59 hour trip to Edmonton and he left by Volkswagon with “Jack”; it was at this time that Jack had asked to change his name to the more familiar and acceptable name Jack. Murray took care of our 14 month old Jimmy. The two bottles were filled by our porter with milk and juice many times. Anne and John took care of each other while I was laying down sucking ice cubes day and night. I leave it up to you to guess why. The only thing I did was change Jimmy's diapers which were homemade disposables, from old sheets. The children lived off the sandwiches, fruit and cookies we brought along in ice-cream pails, as some will remember. They were very good travelers. Our porter was a jewel; he made the beds for us very early and came to check on us during the night. (I would have “bear hugged” him if I dared!) April 5, late afternoon, we arrived in Edmonton. Twelve people were at the Station to welcome us but I felt shaky and uncomfortable after the long trip. In no time we were brought to the Hoogenberg home where a big supper was waiting for us; I perked up immediately. They then left for a congregational meeting and we were all in bed by 8:00. What a blessing! The next day I felt like a new person and the children were all excited with what the new day would bring.

The Hoogenbergs drove us to our new home on 111 Ave. and 116 street. I looked through the whole house and decided that Dad's study should be upstairs again, next to it was a small room that should function as a guest room. This way there would be no interference from the family for Dad. Besides our living and dining room, kitchen and bathroom there was the master bedroom on the main floor as well. I decided to make this “master bedroom” a family room; it was close to the kitchen and handy to keep my eyes on the children. Downstairs were three bedrooms for the whole family to sleep. On Friday morning the moving van arrived with our belongings and in the afternoon we began the unloading. In only two hours Henry Hoogenberg and the movers had rolled out the rug in the living room and put the furniture where it belonged. They also put the beds up and brought every box in the right room. I stood at the door and showed them where it all had to go. How I admired them for carrying all the boxes with books to the study upstairs! When all the beds were made we were ready for a break and enjoyed a delicious supper at the Hoogenberg's again. We were happy that so much was accomplished in such a short time. After supper Henry said, “How

about going to your house again and hang the pictures on the wall?" I was all for it because I often thought that Dad and Jack could be soon arriving. What I had hoped, longed and prayed for, happened! We were almost finished when we heard the familiar sound of the Volkswagon. I do not know who was first at the door, us from the inside or they from the outside. By the time we were finished hugging, Jack had gone through the whole house already and found his bed. Dad was still standing at the door and said, "Mom have we really moved?" "It looks as if we haven't." Then we went to the Hoogenberg family again to pick up our Jimmy and the rest of our belongings. We thanked them for their wonderful care and great help they had provided. And when we were home we thanked God for His protection and bringing us together again as a family in this new city. Joy and praise had filled our hearts and soon we were all ready for a good sleep in our new home.

The first half-year Dad made one-hour visits to 200 families; people who belonged to the church as well as those "hanging on." After finding out what the situation was, several meetings were held in the late fall; trying to clear up some problems and misunderstandings. The last meeting became one of confession of sin, forgiveness and finally reconciliation. This meeting was an unforgettable experience. Seventy people were present and God was working wonders. What a moving evening. I was so thankful for the God-given leadership my dear husband displayed. From there on people began to trust and accept each other and Dad's leadership as well. There was peace and unity and the Church started growing and even flourishing. As always, much prayer was the foundation and by the grace of God numerous things changed for the good.

As the date of our baby's birth came closer, I was very much surprised to wake up on a Sunday morning again with the feeling that this was the day: October 22, 1961. And again I did not tell anything to Dad. He did the whole Service in spite of one of his severe eye infections. I almost forgot my own discomfort and was surprised that he could finish the Service. This was clearly God's doing. After lunch he went to bed until the next morning. I hardly felt like adding to his pain by telling him that our baby was coming soon and waited as long as I could. Since it was the third day of his eye problem I had picked the worst day; driving was impossible and already having forced himself to complete the Service, it was altogether "out" for him to drive me to the University Hospital. He found it terrible to let me go alone but we knew that there was no other way. At midnight I went by taxi to the Hospital. This was one of those nights you never forget; difficult for both of us. It was strange for me to enter the hospital alone. When I

explained that my husband was sick and I came to have my baby delivered the Nurse rose so fast; as if she was stung by a bee. (See how important our husbands are?) In no time they had me ready to begin the long wait of almost seven hours. I knew that Dad was with me all night in thought and prayer and that was what I needed most. My Doctor acted as he had all the time in the world and at 7:00 am our fifth son and sixth child was born. The Doctor phoned home as soon as he could with the happy news. Needless to say that there was much rejoicing again. We called him Andrew Nicolas, named after Dad's oldest brother and my oldest brother. His weight was six pounds even. Dad's eyes were still very sore and red but a night of total darkness had enabled him to help the three oldest off to school and bring the two youngest to our next-door neighbors. Then he drove out to see me and admire our new baby. How good it was that all was well. There was so much joy that God had given us another healthy child.

We were very fortunate that we could find Betty Postma for a few weeks to help us out. I was home in three days already but not allowed to be on my feet too much (varicose vein problems). She was of great help in everything to us. When the children came home from school, we watched the television programs "The Little House on the Prairie" and "Father Knows Best" together. I felt so rich with all our children and they with their new baby brother. After one month I was able to take over and let Betty go home.

In the summer of 1962 we had decided that Dad should go hunting for a place where we could go with our family for vacation. After a long search we were able to buy a bush quarter, five miles north of Mayerthorpe. I was very concerned about the muddy clay roads during rainstorms but not long after we bought it, four miles were paved and the one mile gravel road was always kept in a good shape. We decided to first build a cement multipurpose room. You might ask why? (I have asked Dad to write this part since I had completely forgotten the details about the origin of it all). There were various reasons; first, in 1962 North America experienced what was called, "The Missile Crisis." The Kremlin had set up missiles in Cuba directly aimed at the USA. It was the beginning of the "Cold War." Soon there after, USA and Canadian politicians began talking about the need for nuclear bomb shelters. In 1959, under Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, Canada had built such shelters in Ottawa and every provincial capital. Next, freshly in our minds were the home-made bomb shelters we had made during World War II and with it the thought of how were we to protect our family of small children in case of a nuclear war? Often after listening to radio reports we looked at each other and our six precious children. We were deeply concerned.

Prayers rose up to heaven: “Lord, is there anything we can do to protect them?” Last of all, we knew that at times there were bush fires to contend with. Since a cement shelter would give safety against this as well, we finally decided to inquire about building such a shelter in the fall of 1962. The following years we gathered information about stocking food and water for shelters. Personally, I had a ready made plan how to build dirt mounds around the windows for protection from radiation. The “bomb shelter”, as our neighbors called our basement, did give us some peace of mind during the most threatening years. All around, this basement has been a great source of blessing both summer and winter. And since I have been given the privilege to mention the above, I would like to point out that the original seeds of the pine trees now gracing our farmyard were brought to Canada from the Russian Imperial Gardens by George Rugnet, a France horticulturist. They are called Ladaga pines. We received them as second crop seedlings from our friends Lloyd and Mabelle Conrad in Sangudo.

I am glad Dad was able to write this for me. It is just as he said; this basement has served many purposes. Even the last ten years it was a cool place to sleep in the summer and a cool place to store our produce in the winter. On the far end we made bunk beds; on the one side three high and to the left, two high. We made shelves on the other side for storage. And then, of course, there was our woodstove for cooking and heating. We had doubled old rugs on the floor to keep our feet warm. A table and six old chairs completed our interior. The laundry was done in town and everything was dried on our wonderful clotheslines. 1963 was our first summer vacation in Mayerthorpe, a place where everybody could climb trees and dig holes!

But I also used this time for planning 20 meals for Junior Youth Camp, the first week of August at Edmonton Beach. It was for approximately 75 kids and 10 leaders. After puzzling out the menus I made the grocery list. When back from our weeks of vacation in July, the first thing was shopping and loading our utility trailer. I liked doing this job. It was “my cup of tea” so to speak. For six summers they asked me to do this, as well as the cooking itself at camp. Simon Pronk, who was a baker by trade, did all the baking, pancakes and eggs included. He was very pleasant to have around and his wife was our Nurse at camp. Two other ladies helped me in the kitchen to feed the crowd. The kids had some duties as well. All in all a busy time for both of us but fun and very rewarding.

As a result of much growth in the Church, our building at 111th Ave. and 95th street was soon too small. Almost three acre was bought in the NE part of the

city. The first stage of the building program was finished in 1965. We were able to put more than 300 chairs in this social hall, as it was called when the Church was built. The new manse was ready to move into on Jan.16, 1966. I loved the old manse very much. It was cozy but moving very close to Church was of course ideal for the whole family. Most mornings Dad was in his office in the Church but he had a study at home as well and I loved that. Our new home had five bedrooms, two bathrooms, a counseling room, rumpus room, laundry room, living and dining rooms and kitchen. To be honest it was a lot of work with all the tiled floors; downstairs especially. After camping at Edmonton Beach, preparations for V.B.S. was next which was held in the last two weeks of August.

When we had moved into our new home we could see the cows grazing in the fields. Within a year one street after the other was filled with new homes.

Many afternoons I went to these new homes for a couple of hours, inviting their children to come to Sunday School and V.B.S. One summer we had over 200 children attending our V.B.S. during the morning hours. Other summers a little less. What a huge job it was but also very rewarding.

During the month of our vacation in July, 1964, my dad unexpectedly (for me) passed away. Since the family in Holland could not reach us in Edmonton they had decided to call the RCMP in Mayerthorpe asking them to locate us. Dad had just gone outside with his shotgun because someone driving by had stopped to tell him while he was working in the garden with Anne that a bear just crossed the road behind him going into our bush. The RCMP met Dad on the lane and he informed him of the sad news that my dad had died. I had come out and saw the RCMP talking with Dad. When he came back inside, instead of going with his gun to the bush, I kind of jokingly asked him if the Police gave him a ticket. There was no smile on his face, instead he told me that he had sad news about my dad's passing on to Glory. We knew that he had a heart attack before but when you do not see him, it had not dawned on me how serious it was. In times of sorrow, we would all like to be home, yet I preferred not to go without Dad; I could not handle it. When Dad's mom died he was not able to go either. It was not possible.

During these days I learned that God comforts in unique ways. For example: After being dark and rainy for three days, in the evening, the sun broke through the dark clouds in a glorious way and the rain stopped. We all went outside to enjoy the dry weather and fresh air. As I looked at the sun coming through these

dark clouds it was as if Heaven had opened up for me. I knew that my father was with the Lord and all at once I said, "Hi dad!" And from then on I did not have to cry anymore. A friend wrote, (Mrs. Hoogerwaard, who had just lost her husband) "It is when we need the comfort that God gives it. *It is not given in advance.*"

It was wonderful to live so close to our Church. This was of great help with all the Church activities for the children. The youngest children attended York School or as we called it, the "blue school." They were privileged to come home for lunch. Murray and Jack were enrolled at Victoria Composite High School. Later on Anne attended Junior High School on 132nd Ave. When she came home from school she loved to go with Dad calling on elderly people. All our boys had paper routes at one time or another. Murray found part time work with Woodwards at the North Gate Shopping Center. Jack worked part time at Richard's Hardware on the Ford Road. Of this I am often reminded when I look at the "pictures" hanging on the wall. Jack bought us a present from the store of Jesus at Gethsemane. We were so impressed with the beauty of it, that we purchased the other; Jesus, knocking at the door. They were Richard's last one's Jack told us. At this time, Murray too, gave a special gift from his wages; a pair of beautiful duck bookends.

Most of the time we were together for supper which was so important to us. It was the only time we could have our devotions together without being rushed. In the morning with all six getting ready to leave it was difficult but we still managed to have Dad pray with and for the whole family. I never felt alone even though Dad was gone often 5 evenings a week. On Saturday evening he was always in the study preparing for Sunday's sermons; this was special. It was one of the very few evenings the children had the opportunity to kiss Dad "good night" before they were off to bed.

In the fall of 1968 Murray went to Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. I should have been grateful (and I was) but I found it a very difficult experience to see our oldest "fly the coop." I had to learn that it was part of life with a growing family.

This was also the time that the work was getting too much for Dad. We received a two-month leave of absence that was spent in Mayerthorpe. It was not enough. Talks were held about some help for him for years already but nothing came out of it. Dad has been putting in 65-70 hours per week; it was getting too much for him.

In 1969 I had major surgery and was very restricted in my work. It all pointed to a slower pace for both of us.

During this time, son John was toying with the idea of buying a motorcycle. We were not feeling all that great about it yet with teenagers something like this was to be expected. We all dream about certain things at times. But soon thereafter our supper was interrupted by a commotion down the street. A rider on a motorcycle was involved in an accident and the young man's foot was severely damaged. That ended John's motorcycle dream.

Monarch, Alberta

In June 1970 a “call” came from the Monarch Church to serve their congregation. We both wondered whether a smaller Church was an answer to our prayers and problems. The children were now out of school and Jack was planning to leave for RCMP training in Regina. In fact, he left the same day we moved down south, August 4, 1970. It was hard to leave Edmonton after being there for nine years and four months. Moving is always a difficult time for the whole family; to leave their friends behind and face the unknown. The packing has never been a problem. There is a positive side to moving and that is cleaning up of things. I was glad that we had plenty of time to get ready for this event and also time to get used to the idea of putting our roots down elsewhere.

While we were traveling to Monarch I made a statement to Dad that made him smile. I mentioned that since Murray and Jack had left and their beds were empty that I wanted to care for two children who needed a home. He said, “let us think and pray about it, Mom.”

Arriving at Monarch, I fell in love immediately with the surroundings of our new home. There was a hedge of lilacs between the house and the church. The Church was a unique building built in 1909; white in color with stained glass windows complete with a steeple. A wide caragana hedge was all around the property, even as beautiful spruce trees. We found it just as quiet and restful as in Mayerthorpe, except for the prairie winds. When people complained about it, I suggested that they should call it “prairie music.” It did not take long before I felt very much at home among the farm and town folk. Andy, who had said that he would never be able to find friends, was the first to bring one home. In the fall

the children were picked up by bus to go to school in Nobleford and we began our first round of visiting all the people.

Soon besides preaching, adult bible class and catechism classes, additional responsibilities came our way; Indian Mission on the Blood Reserve, Advisory School Board meetings and looking after 22 families of the Lethbridge Reformed Church, who decided not to amalgamate with the Presbyterians. I joined Dad for the Service on the Blood Reserve whenever possible. Anne and Jim began to take piano lessons with our church organist, Mrs. Alice Dekker. In 1972 Anne, graduated from high school and went to work at Edith Cavel Nursing Home in Lethbridge and boarded there with the Visser family. Jack moved from Regina to Edmonton in January 1971 after five months of training. He had decided that the RCMP was not the way to go for him. Instead, he applied and was accepted for a position with the Edmonton City Police, receiving additional training and graduated in March of that year.

In the mean time he had become engaged to Grace Kaptein, whom he knew from the Edmonton youth group. They had set their marriage date for spring, 1972. But in the spring of 1971, Oma wrote that she was planning to come in the last week of August and visit us along with my brother Klaas and his wife Annie. We all felt, that it would be very nice if they could be present for the wedding! We talked with Jack and Grace if there would be a possibility to move up their marriage date and the result was that a new date was set. It became August 28, 1971 instead. Oma had such happy memories of Jack when she had traveled with him by train in 1965 to Ontario, which had been her first visit after my father had passed away. Oma had always treasured the fact that she was present at Jack and Grace's wedding.

We did decide to volunteer to care for children whose parents were unable to do so; foster parenting as it was called. We were immediately accepted and Morris, a boy of 10 years, was the first child to care for. It was only for 6 weeks until he went to live with his Uncle and Aunt in Saskatchewan. In the summer of 1971 Jennifer Across the Mountain came and she was with us for 6 months. We had been told that she was in the habit of running away. Often she did; sometimes when we were at the dentist, while shopping, from school or from home. We kept it up for about ten times but then the Social Services Department gave up on her.

On March 19, 1972 our "two empty beds" all at once were occupied with five children. We will never forget the first days. It must have been very scary for

them to be with strange people. While they were all sitting on the couch the oldest of them began to talk, first with Anne, who was sitting with them to make them feel more comfortable. Francine pointed to the open door in the study where Dad was working and asked, "does that man drink a lot?" Anne assured all of them that no one in our house ever drank. Later, when John came home from work at the Konijnenbelts, he got the idea to give them piggyback rides and that broke the ice, so to speak. By suppertime they all were ready for a big meal and Donald fell asleep in the highchair before we began our dessert. Stacy was very sleepy as well after the meal was finished. We decided to make all of them ready for bed. We had two double beds in one room. but when we later came to check on them we found them all huddled together in one bed, sound asleep. It was the only way they wanted to sleep for the first week. They were very plagued by nightmares the first weeks.

When the Social Services Department phoned about the five children, asking us to take them all in, we told them that we could only do this until they had found a home for the three oldest. They agreed on this because it had been impossible for them to find a home to even consider taking them in on a temporary basis. Francine's birthday was August 15, 1964; Loris was born on June 20, 1966; Adele was born on January 10, 1968. Stacy's was one week after my birthday on April 27, 1969 and Donald's two weeks after Dad's birthday, July 15, 1970.

During the first week we went to Lethbridge shopping for clothing for all five of them. Anne sure was my right-hand helper. We took 5 shopping carts. The three oldest pushed their own shopping cart and we pushed the others with Stacy and Donald riding in them. This way we could keep all the sizes of the children's clothing separate. It took three weeks before the Social Service called us that they had found a home for the three oldest girls in Taber; a family by the name of Keith Turner who lived on a farm.

Of course we knew from the start that there were deeper needs in their lives than just caring for them physically. We will never fathom the longings a child has when taken from their parents, siblings, relatives, friends and familiar surroundings.

Soon Stacy and Donald began to feel at home. They were especially eager to sit on the counter, watching me bake and waiting for the beaters to be licked. I think that I enjoyed it just as much as they did! They loved to be with Dad when he was making a swing and a sandbox for them. He hauled some sand home and of

course they went along. Dad also bought some poles and chains to make a swing which lasted many years I am sure! There were also two tricycles to ride on the sidewalk; all these things they really enjoyed. During bedtime they loved us reading a story and singing songs, which I have written on a separate sheet for them. It was so good to see them happy and adjusting to being part of our family. On Sunday Stacy would keep her Sunday clothes on until she could get Dad from the Church after meeting with the people. She would ride her tricycle back and forth and as soon as she saw him she would run and give him her hand to walk home.

Donald could not wait to get rid of his Sunday clothes to play again with the German Shepherd dog. He been warned to not keep on pulling on the dog's hair and tail but he did it once too often. One day the dog jumped him, stood over him and bit him in the lip. It was a blessing that Dad was near and kicked the dog away from him. We rushed him to the Hospital where the doctor gave him stitches and an injection just in case the dog had the infectious disease of rabies. Our prayers were heard and his lip healed fast. When Dad wanted to shoot the dog there was too much opposition. We all loved him. Another accident that Donald had was when he nearly flattened his pinky finger between the bedroom door one day. Dad had a consistory meeting but John was home and drove us to the Hospital. On our way Donald stopped crying and made a remark about the many stars he saw in the sky. I could not believe it as he was in much pain. When the Doctor was finished fixing his pinky he told us that he had seldom seen a small boy crying so little, with all this pain. He gave him a big sucker as a reward that he enjoyed on his way home. After we prayed with him he slept the whole night through and again he healed fast, for which we were very grateful.

One of the jobs John found for after school and Saturdays was that of trucking drinking water to farmers around Nobleford and Monarch. Every time the large cement underground cistern was empty, he filled ours as well. In the whole area there was a lot of alkali in the water and was not good for consumption, laundry or bathing. It was there that I learned to appreciate clean water more then ever before. Andy loved roaming the fields with his gun, just like his Dad used to do when he was young; shooting jackrabbits. He also enjoyed the two calves we bought every spring. They were keeping the grass short on the two acres behind the caragana hedge which we had for a wind break. In our free time the garden was our pride and joy. It filled our freezer with vegetables for the whole year. We also had a large row of raspberries. They gave us 20 pints of jam and fresh desserts in the summer. The summers were very dry and we used the flooding

method with water from a man-made canal close by. This happened every other week during the night. If thunder storms brought some rain it would be less but that was not too often. The farmers around us used irrigation for their crops and occasional rainstorms did the rest.

Anne now lived in Edmonton, first boarding with Grace and Jack and then sharing a basement suite with a girlfriend, Wilma Maneschyn. She worked at Alberta Blue Cross for four years. She found her life's partner, Henry van de Vliert, in the Emmanuel Church. I will never forget the day when Henry asked Dad permission to marry our daughter. She found no rest while Henry and Dad were having a walk and a talk outside and I still wonder why? Who could turn down such a handsome young man with all the potential qualities of a good husband, by the grace of God? Henry became her beloved on May 31, 1975. Their wedding bells rang in Monarch. The wedding service was beautiful and led by her Father and oldest brother Murray. When the time came for the exchange of rings their ring-bearer, Donald, was sound asleep on my lap. When he woke up a little later he said, "Where are my rings?" I told him that they were already on Anne and Henry's hands and that satisfied our four year old. Stacy, who was their flower girl was wide awake throughout the whole Service. John and Jeanne (then still Scholten) was their best man and maid of honor. A Tea was served by the ladies of the Monarch congregation for all who came to the Service and a dinner followed in Lethbridge for family. A meaningful program concluded this beautiful day. We also had visitors over from Holland which was very special to all of us. They were my brother Klaas and Tante Annie and my sister Teuns and Oom Frank.

In the meantime someone else came into our lives. It was the life partner of our oldest son. We met her for the first time at Murray's boarding place in the home of Mrs. Weerstra in Holland, Michigan in 1974. I also remember Carol's first visit to our home in Monarch. We knew that they were on their way but not when exactly they would be arriving. The evening before I had not cleaned off the kitchen table because of late company. This surely was not my custom. But that night at midnight Carol and Murray caught me with a messy kitchen. Of course the next morning I apologized to our daughter to be and what do you think was her answer? "Oh, mom, when I stepped in the kitchen, I felt at home immediately. I knew that you were easy going just like me."

The last week of November Dad needed gallbladder surgery. It was very unfortunate because it was so close to Carol and Murray's wedding date. It meant

he had only three weeks to recuperate; not long enough for the long trip to Holland, Michigan.

We traveled by train with eleven of us on December 19, 1975. Alas, there was four hour delay because of a derailment in Montana. We arrived past midnight in Chicago where Murray had been waiting for us with a big van to drive us to our destination. Our five Holloway children all fell asleep but us adults were praying because there was a terrible snowstorm with slippery roads. At 2:30 am we arrived in Holland, Michigan and were brought to a home with lots of beds and sleeping bags. The owners were gone and they had been so kind to let us use their home. We were so thankful that we had some time to rest before the wedding would take place; at 12:00 noon the ceremony would start. I don't know how many of the family knew how ill Dad felt and how tired he was. We could not rejoice as we would have liked to yet we were very grateful that we could be present for their marriage celebration. We could not bear the thought of missing the wedding of our oldest son. I do not remember the whole Service but Dad and I were deeply touched by the vows our children made to each other; this part we will never forget especially so since they had written their own. We had a better trip home but I think that the children enjoyed the trip more then we did. Before leaving from Monarch, Jeanne and I had filled several ice cream pails with sandwiches, cookies and fruit. It was all gone by the time we came home.

Soon Christmas came around; old and new year Services which meant preaching eight times in eight days. I knew that this being overtired could not go on much longer. January 7, 1976 John went with us to the Hospital in Lethbridge. Dad stayed for observation for five days and the verdict was "you must take a long rest." We knew that we were in for a long break and much rest was needed. Dad resigned from his church work and we could stay in our home until the end of the school year. I was very thankful that we could do so. It gave us time to work things through and come to terms with our situation. I am also glad that Dad received the strength to give a farewell message to the Monarch Reformed Church as well as in the Nobleford Christian Reformed Church where he had preached many times. We also celebrated the Lord's Supper that last Sunday in Monarch. This was priceless to us all. Many people had not been aware of the load Dad had carried the last months during his illness which even included a suicide in December. We have received much help from several families. An elderly couple, the Brouwers, came every Sunday morning with cookies for the school lunches for the children and a cake and dessert for the Sunday meal. The prayer support and help which came in different ways from many were a great encouragement.

When we were in the Netherlands celebrating our 25th Wedding Anniversary in March, 1973 John had taken the opportunity to date a girl from our congregation. When we came home John began to share something about a certain girl in the church and guess what? Before he finished his story and before he had mentioned her name we said that we thought that Jeanne Scholten was his choice. I know that John was rather surprised that his parents had noticed something but by now I am sure they are aware of what is going on with their own daughters before they share certain things. The “love at first sight” led to more to come and about that I must now write.

Before we moved to Mayerthorpe at the end of June, John and Jeanne wanted to marry and set their wedding date to be June 4. We were very happy about that. They too were ready for their promises and sharing their lives together. I was deeply moved to see Dad and Murray do the Wedding Service together again. The whole day was uplifting and good. Being together for this special day was just wonderful. Yet, I have to mention that for several months already I had become quite depressed as a result of menopause. On the morning of the wedding Dad had a hard time persuading me to get ready for the Service. It is hard to explain what depression is. It feels like having no courage for anything no matter how important or special it is. On Doctor's orders we could not take Francine, Loris and Adele to the farm in Mayerthorpe. I was somewhat comforted that they could go back to the Turner family in Taber. I felt very bad about it but there was no choice. I simply did not have the strength nor the courage to go on the way it was. I thank God for Dad's prayers and encouragement over and over again so that we both could be at John and Jeanne's wedding even though it was a difficult start it became a beautiful day. Soon after the wedding it was time to start packing for our move to Mayerthorpe. We came to Monarch with the six of us, and we left with six. But instead of Anne and John we now had Stacy and Donald. As you know already, leaving a congregation is a difficult thing for me and leaving Monarch was no exception. Dad's farewell message and the celebration of Holy Communion was very meaningful and there were many tears and hugs. Even during the lunch after the Service we received so much love that it is hard to express how it all felt. June 28 Jeanne's Father came with his farm truck to move us and Jeanne helped us all day long as she had done so many Saturdays as well. While they were loading she cleaned every empty room. What a great help she was. Hillegonda Harbers came that morning to send us off with prayers for health and healing. What a gift to be carried by prayer.

Mayerthorpe
June 29, 1976 – September, 1978

There was much work to be done before the house was clean and everything in place. It was a blessing that there was no pressure as far as time was concerned. We also had two months before the children were going back to school. Jim took his last year of high school here too and graduated in 1977. Thereafter he moved to Edmonton to attend the University of Alberta where he boarded with Hank and Jane Woelinga. The time of work and rest out here was marvelous. We both began to feel different after all the past pressure. We began to make gardens out of patches of wilderness; a bit at the time. Herman Scholten gave us a milk cow which he had said was very hard to milk. Dad's farming abilities were put to good use, especially the taming of a kicking milk cow. The experience from his youth was priceless. The cow soon found out who was in charge. We had no income for several months, but as Elijah was fed by the ravens so we were taken care of by way of selling enough milk each week to buy our groceries. With some other gifts we received from people, God met every need during the first half year. There after a disability fund was in place as long as was needed. I found it a very humbling experience to receive instead of give, but there are many lessons to be learned during a life time and this was one of them.

In September, 1976 there was another sign of God's care for us. On a Saturday morning a big truck with lumber drove in our yard. Dad told the man that he obviously was on the wrong place but just then another car drove in with six men who had smiles from ear to ear. They were members from the Emmanuel Community Church and they started explaining that they had come to build a room on our house! They had heard by way of the grape vine that there was no room for the piano in our small house and that it was standing outside under a canvas. The whole congregation had pitched in to make this possible. We must have looked as if "we saw water burning," as a Dutch saying goes. Soon they began unloading, measuring and making all kinds of other preparations. The room was to be built on top of the basement which was the original vacation place in 1962.

Besides the room they also built a good size barn. It took me a while before I could fathom the love and care of the Edmonton people. For six Saturdays various men came back until everything was under the roof. Adrian op der Heijde, who was in charge of everything, was there every Saturday. The inside of the new room Dad had completed by Christmas. The piano and a Christmas tree was all there was to be in for the time being. Even though drapes and a rug were missing

we were overjoyed that our piano had a new home. When I look back in our lives God has shown us over and over that He knows best and cares best. We can never thank Him enough for His wonderful provisions.

In the fall of 1977 Oma Van Leeuwen came to visit us for the third time. Oom Klaas and Tante Annie had come with her to visit their son John and Ina and family in Onoway. What a blessing these four weeks were to all of us. We enjoyed it so much. We had more time to spend with Oma than with the two previous visits. It gave us also more time to go places with her such as to all our children in Alberta. When my brother Klaas and Tante Annie came to visit us for one week we noticed how much he was in pain. He had begun to suffer more and more as a result of living on one lung for 28 years already. When they were leaving for Ontario Klaas said to me, "Corrie, I will not see you here on this earth anymore." I answered, "I know that, Klaas, but we will see each another again in Heaven." He replied, "Yes, we will." Only one month later, he went to his Heavenly Home. In his last hours Annie asked him if he wanted a visit of the Pastor. He answered, "No, God has laid His hand on me and that is enough." (Psalm 139:5) He did not need a Pastor anymore; he was fully ready to go Home to his Lord and Savior.

We enjoyed living on the farm very much and the children did as well. Yet we both began to long more and more to work again in another Church once more. We missed it all along but now we felt strong enough to do so again. We began praying about it, saying "that we only wanted a Church if it was in His plan". We also began to talk about it to our children and some of them were wondering if it would be better to stay on the farm. Would we be able to handle a full time job again? We could well see why this question was on their mind. They were on ours as well. We appreciated their concern yet when the "call" came from Surrey, B.C. in the beginning of August, 1978 we both felt confident to accept the challenge in faith, trusting in God to supply all our needs. We realized that for our children it was a big change again and difficult to leave. Stacy and Donald loved to play here in the tree house that Andy, with much effort, had built. Stacy was an expert in finding a nest with little mice and wrapping them in kleenex tissue and making sure that our cats would not come near. Andy was the proud owner of five sows which were due to have little ones the following month. He had a part time job at Champion Feeds in Mayerthorpe which helped him feed them with leftovers from there. It was very hard for him to sell them all at once. But when he was able to sell them to people he knew it helped him part with his prized possessions. Of course there was so much more we were going to miss: the

fresh air, the peace and quiet and the sound of the coyotes. But there were also happy things to look forward to. We were all very happy that Jim would go along and live with us again. He would continue his education at Simon Fraser University.

It was a busy time of praying, planning and packing. Dad did his share in his study and all the things that had to be done outside. The children did their own packing and helped me in whatever way they could. Our moving date was set for Labor Day, September 4. They never came that day because of a breakdown on their truck. They came the next day but only at four pm. It was a big disappointment for Andy especially since now he could not register for school (grade 12) on time in Surrey. We were also concerned about the weather as well since it had been raining already for two days and the roads were getting worse all the time. It was 9:00 pm by time we were loaded and ready to leave. Jim was driving behind us as he plowed through the mud with his 1975 Dodge vehicle. The roads were bad. The drivers needed all their attention to stay on the road. Dad said only one thing during these 40 km of mud road, "You keep on praying Mom." What a relief when we reached Evansburg, on our way to Highway 16. God pulled us through literally. When we were driving on the highway our cars were washed from all the mud because of the heavy rain. Our next prayer request was, "Lord, help us find a place to sleep" but every time we saw a "no vacancy sign" because of the long weekend. At last in Hinton we found one room with two double beds. Two of the six gladly slept on the floor in their sleeping bags. We slept there from 12:00 midnight until 6:00 am the next morning. This was all the time we could afford because at 8:00 pm people were waiting for us at our new home in Surrey to help unload our furniture. We made three stops at gas stations and one stop for prayer. Jim's car was losing power and could not make the hills anymore. It was scary. It might sound strange to some of you but Dad and Jim "laid hands" on the car, asking God to bring us to Surrey in time. What excitement when we noticed that Jim's vehicle was able to keep up with ours, climbing hills and all. When we stopped for gas a few hours later, Jim said, "The car is doing okay, Dad but keep praying until we are there." Well, we did. What a faith and prayer trip this was!