# INTRODUCTION

**Memoir of Awakening**

This memoir will not only give some background on my life, but also show what an adventure it has been. It is a sort of *companion* to another book that we are publishing about the same time.

When my husband, Tom, and I were much younger we founded an organization to help people express their personal and financial freedoms. This book includes the story of that adventure. At that time, we and our staff wrote a book called *America’s First Freedom*. Unexpected events caused the book to never be previously published.

In 1980 we weren’t able to make digital copies of any of our writings. Almost miraculously, we found a hard copy of *part* of the book that recently launched the project to finish it and to also fill in some of gaps of history. It has been 40 years!

For years people have encouraged us to write a book about our lives, including the events during the time recounted in *America’s First Freedom*. We just never felt inclined to do so. Some of the events that would need to be recounted just felt too negative and were past history. Due to the events of the last two years (2020 & 2021), it became more and more important for us to tell this story, with some very important and not-before-told background filled in.

In the writing of this book, *Memoir of Awakening*, I want to share the, at times, almost unbelievable story of my life, from *my* point of view. My husband, Tom, and our wonderful children each have their own stories. I can only tell *my story*, from my perspective. I appreciate others in my life and acknowledge in all these experiences I’ve had also affected them – positively or otherwise.

This book will fill in a lot more of the personal experiences and perspectives that have taken place in our (specifically, *my*) life during that 40 years! I’ll try to keep it brief and easy-to-read. Life can get pretty complicated, but it was my life, and I am happy to have lived it.

The over-riding theme through my life has been one of wanting freedom and to not be controlled by churches, governments, employers, etc. I have found the harder I’ve *pushed against* those trying to control me, the more I’ve attracted them to me.

We have found we needed to *start over* many, many times, it has been quite a ride with many life lessons. Starting over, as well as seeking freedom, have been constant themes. I have come to the conclusion that a spiritual awakening is the ultimate starting over. I will tell you my story and then wrap it up at the end with how the various steps have led to my own personal *Wake Up Call.*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Introduction**

**Chapter 1 – My Journey Begins**

**Chapter 2 – God’s One True Church**

**Chapter 3 – Life After A Cult**

**Chapter 4 – A Calling**

**Chapter 5 – Why Would IRS Attack?**

**Chapter 6 – Off to Federal Prison**

**Chapter 7 – Starting Over Again. . . and Again**

**Chapter 8 – Learning to Live in Joy**

**Chapter 9 – Back From the Future**

**Chapter 10 – The Best Is Yet to Come**

# CHAPTER ONE: MY JOURNEY BEGINS

Where does one *even start* to tell an almost unbelievable story?

With a desire to lay a foundation, but not bore you to death, I’ll just begin with a quick story of my early life.

I was born at the end of WWII – the leading edge of the generation called the Baby Boomers. Boy! Were those soldiers happy to return to their wives and nine months later – BOOM! A population explosion!

I had a wonderful, idyllic childhood. Our family, from my perspective, lived the “Happy Days” kind of suburban life. There were four of us siblings. My older sister, Judi, and brother, Jon, were five and four years older than me, respectively. Then four years after me, along came our youngest sister, Teresa. I remember a great deal of laughter around the dinner table and staying outside playing until the streetlights came on.

We rode our bikes all over Aurora (a suburb east of Denver) without fear or concern. We played in the rushing water of the drainage system when it rained. We had pets and friends all around town. We rode in the back of pickup trucks and ran with sticks (or scissors?) in our hands. We had accidents, sure, but our mom would patch us up with mercurochrome and maybe a band aid—if we were lucky.

My biggest worry as a youngster was not upsetting my big sister, Judi. Ha! She was a stern task master and, being nine years my elder, had little time or tolerance

for me. Needless to say, we are best of friends now and have been our entire adult life!

My brother, Jon, was my idol (and still is). He could do no wrong. He could easily bribe me into *scratching* his back because nothing was more important than pleasing him. He set such a wonderful example of generosity and concern for others. One year at his birthday, he asked my parents to buy him a baseball glove for a position he didn’t play. When asked, he responded that it wasn’t for him, but one of his buddies who needed that kind of glove and couldn’t afford it. That little gesture stuck with me my whole life.

The youngest sibling, Teresa, was also my best friend and *pupil*. I loved to play school and she was always a willing student (at least I perceived she was). I believed it was my job to impart all the wisdom of the world to her as her esteemed teacher. Today, she is my biggest teacher and mentor on so many subjects!

She was also my co-conspirator in coming up with plays, musicals, and various performances. We built the stage, got the costumes lined up and learned our parts (I was the director as well). My poor family, or whoever was available, would then sit in rapt appreciation of our production. It is a wonder neither of us went into the theater. It was always a great joy to entertain an audience.

It is so gratifying and fantastic to be able to see each other regularly now as we are in our great, golden years. We all went in different directions for many years as we built careers and families. Thankfully, we all eventually gravitated back to our hometown. It is absolutely *the very best* thing to be able to get together for holidays and other times to share our lives at this stage. It is one of the biggest blessings that I count every day!

Our dad was a creative, generous, and gifted home builder. He had served in the South Pacific in the SeaBees (CBs - Construction Battalion). As many of the returning soldiers, dad never really wanted to talk about the war. He set about building a construction company and a family, while trying to forget about the past and its unpleasant memories.

Even while trying to repress these memories, I can only guess now that the war took its toll. Like many returning soldiers he had mental and emotional demons and turned to alcohol to soothe them. Many suffered likewise, and at that time no one thought, cared, or tried to give those men any kind of professional help. I am sure my dad would have rejected it, even if offered. Tough men just *toughed it out*.

Mostly, our idyllic family didn’t seem to notice (or at least, I didn’t). It wasn’t until 1959 that I was aware of how much those psychological effects really had on the marriage of my parents. They had squabbled before and there were a few times I woke up in the middle of the night to hear them arguing. The next day things always seemed to be okay. But it was worse for them than I realized at age 13.

Ultimately, my mom left my dad in the fall of 1959 and headed to California – into the fold of a fast–growing church formed by a charismatic radio evangelist, Herbert W. Armstrong. She had been listening to him on the radio and reading the literature put out by his organization for several months. Judi had enrolled in their college, Ambassador College, for the 1959-1960 years. She was engaged to a local Colorado guy who was in the military, and they had decided she should do a couple of years of college before they married.

My mother was drawn to move to Pasadena to the place where the church headquarters were and where Judi was attending college. So off we went! Mom, Teresa, and I headed off on the adventure of our lives. It nearly broke my heart to leave my dad and brother. By the time we left, I was as convinced, as much as a thirteen-year-old could be, that we were following God’s wishes for our family. Mom was offered a job fairly quickly at the college and we found an apartment we could afford. It was oddly exciting.

The Radio Church of God (as it was called then) promised answers and the comfort of being involved with the one and only TRUE church. How appealing was that! Teresa and I were enrolled in the Church’s Imperial Schools. My high school years were within this sheltered and cloistered environment. We had little association with anyone who wasn’t in the church. We had our own family, friends, gatherings, holidays, and traditions. It was like being enfolded in the arms of a benevolent dictator. One thing for sure – I was sheltered and avoided the drugs and wild living of the hippies of the 1960s. I am grateful for that – even though some would say I missed a lot of *fun*! Believe me, we had a great deal of fun as well!

The head of the church was regarded as the only one with direct contact with God and he would give us, his followers, all the answers and directives that he received from above. It was an unbelievably comfortable way to proceed through those tumultuous 1960s as a teenager.

**The Teachings of the Church in a Nutshell**

Some things are hard to boil down to a few key points, but I’ll try. The Radio Church of God (later, the Worldwide Church of God) believed it was of the *lineage* of the early Christian Church founded by Peter – specifically, the Philadelphian Church era. We were taught that the *right* day to worship was the 7th day of the week (Saturday) and that the holidays being kept by the world at large were pagan in origin and abhorred by God.

Much research, many booklets and pamphlets were written, and dozens of sermons told us of the pagan and early Egyptian/Phoenician origins (thus, sun worship) of the holidays that are enjoyed and merchandized today. Every aspect of Christmas, Easter & Halloween, specifically, was analyzed for its authenticity in the Bible.

Those holidays that make up the religious framework for much of Western Christianity’s traditions could not be substantiated in the Bible. Therefore, we shunned them and were definitely *oddballs* for doing so.

Instead, we were taught to observe the Holy Days as recorded in the early chapters of the Old Testament and kept by Israel (loosely resembling the days kept by the Jewish Faith today). Without going into a long dissertation, we believed that the people of the United States were generally descendants of the *Lost 10 Tribes of Israel* (along with Britain, and most of the European countries). Specifically, it was taught that the U.S. was descended from the tribe of Manasseh.

Being of that lineage (descendants of Israel), we were very careful to follow many of the teachings from the Old Testament scriptures. We followed the guidance given to the children of Israel about food choices and what to avoid: pork, shellfish, etc. We were taught to observe the Holy Days as mentioned above. These Holy Day celebrations gave us a reminder and touchstone for how the Tribes of Israel were led from slavery and oppression to freedom in the Promised Land. Here’s a thumbnail summary of them (found in Leviticus 23):

## Passover

Commemorating the time when the Israelites were told to paint blood on their doorposts so the Angel of God would *pass over* their homes during the night that the firstborn sons of Egypt were being killed. We gathered to somberly partake of a service of wine and crackers (unleavened, of course), as well as the symbolic ceremony of washing the feet of another church member. This was to show our humility as Jesus had done the night of Passover before his crucifixion, today referred to as the *Last Supper*.

## Feast of Unleavened Bread

This was/is a week-long festival where we were to eat no bread with leavening in it for seven days. Leavening was compared to sin. We were to, metaphorically, commit no sin and then on the 7th day of this festival we were to hold a holy convocation. We spent many days prior to the beginning of this thoroughly cleaning our homes. The fact that my mother had a deeply engrained belief that a very thorough spring cleaning needed to be done each year made this process even more *thorough* for us. We cleaned toasters, freezers, handbags and anywhere we thought some crumbs might be lurking – to rid our lives of hidden sins.

## Feast of Pentecost

By counting seven Sabbaths (or 50 days – *count 50 as the word Pentecost translates*) we would come back together to celebrate the first fruits of the harvest. During this Holy Day we were taught that we, as a group, were symbolically the *first fruits* of God’s Harvest or salvation. It is noted here that our *observance* of the instructions for the Holy Days as described in the Old Testament were not strictly by the scriptures. We didn’t sacrifice any lambs or animals. Of course, in the New Testament there is a clear connection between these sacrifices and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, or Jesus, therefore animal sacrifices were no longer required (thankfully).

Another thing to note: Most of the members of the church were not farmers nor earned their livelihood by agrarian means. But verse 22 of Leviticus 23 talks about not *making clear riddance* of the corners of the fields, but rather leave the corners for the poor and the stranger. This was again a way to reinforce the need to take care of the widows in the church, many of which were made so because of the doctrine pertaining to divorce and remarriage. I’ll go deeper into this doctrine a little later.

In the New Testament this Holy Day of Pentecost was referenced in the early Christian churches as the day that the Holy Spirit came down upon all the followers. Paul is recorded as saying, *“*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”

## Feast of Trumpets

This Holy Day represented the time when Jesus would return to earth. He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather the elect (true Christians) from one end of the earth to the other. We gathered for observation of this day for sermons, singing, and fellowship – and *food*! All these Holy Days and Festivals had good food in common, except the *next* one.

## Day of Atonement

This Holy Day is also observed today by people of the Jewish faith as Yom Kippur. It was a day to *afflict* our souls – to fast without food or water for 24 hours (from sunset until sunset). During this time, Israel was *making atonement* for all their sins and misdeeds. Of course, Christians believe that Jesus died to atone for their or our sins. This festival was meant to be kept “throughout your generations” as a *reminder* to all people what the sacrifice of Jesus’ life really meant. Of course, the theme of all the festivals of good food still prevailed this day because of how *good* the food tasted after the fast was broken! The meal after sunset that ended that Fast Day was *especially delicious!*

## The Feast of Tabernacles

Once again, the Children of Israel were commanded to come together for a seven-day festival by dwelling in “booths”, or *temporary dwellings* during this time. A hotel or motel room sufficed for us in modern times. This represented the temporary nature of the lives of those tribes of Israel after they left Egypt and wandered around before finally coming into the Promised Land. It would mean for us, today, that we, too, were like strangers or sojourners in a foreign land. One day we, too, would finally find the Promised Land.

For us, this was the most joyful time of the year. We had ten percent of our annual income (most of it anyway) to spend in seven days (due to the teachings requiring tithing of one’s gross income). The church held this festival in pre-determined venues around the country and the world. It was so wonderful because we could buy a few clothes for the services, travel to wherever the venue was we were attending. With permission we could visit family or friends anywhere in the world that we could afford to go. We ate the very best meals of the year and had wonderful times to *fellowship* and mingle with all our friends. Wonderful memories were made at this festival.

Basically, this Feast was a metaphorical representation of the New Millennium – 1000 years of peace and joy that followed the return of Jesus to the earth as King and Ruler. We all were envisioning and anticipating a period of time when the “lion would lie down with the lamb” referred to in Isaiah 11:6. Many a sermon waxed eloquently about what it would be like and how wonderful it was to look forward to. It was to be a time of peace, long life and joy.

## The Last Great Day

The Feast of Tabernacles ended with *The Last Great Day*, part of this longer festival, but a special Holy Day in and of itself. It was to be a solemn assembly that signified the time when all who had previously died and been buried would be resurrected and stand before God in the last great judgment day. We weren’t taught about the *rapture* exactly, but this was as close as we got. Only those who had been chosen, who had dedicated their lives to God and who lived following Jesus Christ, would live on in the New Jerusalem.

It was always a great celebration. At sundown on this day, we would have dinner at the finest local restaurants and say our goodbyes to friends and

family we had met during the festival, before heading back to our respective homes.

This is my memory of the Holy Days and how they affected my teenage and young married life. While our family didn’t continue to *literally* observe these days after we left the church organization membership, I have always been cognizant as the calendar days ticked by each year of how these wonderful festivals affected my growth. These days also have wonderful personal meaning for each of us today in our spiritual development, as well as the fulfillment of prophecies and promises from various parts of the Bible.

I mentioned that we had set aside a large part of our income in order to observe these Holy Days. We were to strictly tithe on *gross income* to the church: 10% to Headquarters; 10% for the annual Holy Days meetings and conventions; and every third year another 10% (sent to HQ) for the *widows and fatherless*. Ministers were considered the same as the Levites in Old Israel and therefore were exempt from the second and third tithes. Unfortunately, as we would learn much later, this was an astounding amount of money and the management of such became quite questionable and *one of the questions* we had that caused our departure from the church. I’ll mention more about that later in the story.

The church believed in healing by faith, with very little trust or reliance on doctors and allopathic medicine. We didn’t go to doctors with every sniffle and stomachache – instead, we had ourselves and our families *anointed with oil* and prayed over by the church ministers. Many amazing, spontaneous healings were reported. We were always taught that it was by our faith that we were healed.

Soon after we moved to Pasadena, I had a severe toothache. My mom took me to a local dentist and the x-ray showed there was an obvious infection. We told him we would come back later, and promptly sought out one of the ministers to pray for me with the anointing of oil. After returning to the dentist, a second x-ray confirmed that all that infection was *gone*! As a 13-year-old this personal experience was all I needed to be a true believer!

We felt that doctors had certain advantageous skills – setting bones, etc. Even much later in my life, rather than going to a hospital I delivered both of our children at our home in a bed with my husband and a local mid-wife in attendance. As our children grew up, we continued to avoid doctors and didn’t get vaccinations (until later after we had left the church and were convinced it might be a good idea).

This basic *distrust* of the medical profession resulted in many members, including my mother, taking an interest in a more holistic approach to our lives – particularly in reference to nutrition and other lifestyle improvements. It became a way of life that I carried on for most of my life (sometimes more diligently than others). I am forever grateful for this influence in my life.

We immediately began shunning refined white sugar, white flour and other processed foods. For some reason we felt that brown sugar and whole wheat flour were better for us. Of course, we’ve learned much more since, but at that time we adapted all our recipes for brown sugar and whole wheat flour. White = bad and brown = good when it came to food.

Some of the experiments our dear mom tried included things like eating dinner for breakfast and breakfast for dinner. She read somewhere that was better for you.

Thankfully, that didn’t last too long, as it didn’t fit in with our schedules very well. Another one was making *quinine water* – boiling grapefruit and lemon rinds, then drinking that water (little did I know that in 2021 that would be recommended as an alternative remedy called hydroxychloroquine for the Covid-19 pandemic). These are just a few examples of the *health food fanaticism* we embraced. Today, many of these practices are just called clean eating and wholistic protocols. Some “authorities” call them quackery.

As I matured and later had my own family, I tried as best I could to follow some the foundational principles of better nutrition as best I could. I also tried to not be a tyrant about it (not that my mom was tyrannical, but she had a *strong personality* in these matters). Even today I still gravitate toward a more natural, holistic and “alternative” approach to my health care.

The ministers were held in very high esteem and hierarchical awe by most of the members of the church. The leader (Herbert W. Armstrong) and his son and heir apparent (Garner Ted Armstrong) were held with such high esteem that to suggest any impropriety or misconduct on their part was unthinkable. By extension, all of the ministers *on down the line of the structure* were also looked upon with great respect. Mr. Armstrong was considered an Apostle (the 13th) on par with those who palled around with Jesus during his short ministry on earth. All his decisions were considered to be straight from God and not to be questioned.

Probably one of the most powerful and *fear-based doctrines* of the church had to do with prophecy and the imminent future. Herbert Armstrong had been given a *personal revelation*, through much research and Bible study, about the many prophecies in the Bible (primarily the books of Daniel and Revelation). He had come to believe and teach that the world as we knew it would end in 1975. So, in the mid to late 60s, time was getting short. Sermons got more urgent and all our decisions and planning for the future were colored by this looming event.

We were taught that we (as the one and only church members) would be removed from *society* and taken to *a place of safety* (a form of rapture) to live until many undesirable things played out for the rest of those left behind. After such time as this tribulation passed, we would then be ushered into a *Great Millennium*, one thousand years of peace.

At this point (after all the prophecies of 1975 were fulfilled) Christ would return to earth and all the *righteous* would then begin governing the world for 1000 years. At this time also all the saints who have previously died, would rise from their graves and become alive again to join us all for a glorious reign of peace for 1000 years. Eutopia! The lion and the lamb would lie down together in peaceful coexistence.

I remember that while counseling us for our impending wedding, Mr. Armstrong reminded us that if we were going to have any children, we should start right away so we wouldn’t have *babes-in-arms* when we made this trip to Petra, in the desert in Jordan, our designated *place of safety* during the tribulation. If you look into the current day Petra, it will show that we would have been suffering a great deal living as “spoiled Americans” in that area in about 1975. Talk about grumblers and complainers!

## Divorce and Remarriage

Another of the teachings and doctrines of the Church involved divorce and remarriage. The church taught that once a person was married, it was binding for life. A divorce doesn’t make it not-so in the eyes of God. There were exceptions whereby the ministers of the church could *nullify* a marriage if they believed there was fraud or extenuating circumstances. Usually though, if a person were to divorce, they could not remarry without that second marriage to be considered *adulterous*.

This one teaching personally affected my mother, and hence me and my sisters. My mom had been married at a young age, at 18 or 19 years of age. She and her high school sweetheart had run off and gotten married without either parent’s blessing. Her mother objected to it and in cahoots with the boy’s mother, they had the marriage annulled. The Church ruled that in spite of that, it was her *one shot at marriage*. Therefore, the marriage to my father was *adulterous* and she had to end it if she wanted to become a member of the Church. That was the reason for our moving to Pasadena in 1959.

## Back to My Story

The church had grade and high schools, as well as a four-year liberal arts college. Almost all of the teachers, professors, and staff were from within the ranks of the church organization. In this environment, I met my husband-to-be as a freshman. Because of the strict rules governing how we were to relate and interact as students of the opposite sex, we developed a friendship that would survive three years of separation. In the *free-love hippie age* we were living, our campus rules objected to students even holding hands!

The church had a campus also in Bricket Wood, England and I was *chosen* to be one of the lucky transfer students. I spent my sophomore through senior years at that campus. Tom and I wrote letters as phone calls were prohibitively expensive. I really liked living in England and was afforded several opportunities to travel throughout the Continent, as Europe was referred to.

Additionally, there were students from all over the world—mainly the Commonwealth countries, but others as well. It was so interesting and mind-expanding to meet, talk with and socialize with others whose backgrounds were so different from mine.

Tom and I corresponded, as studies and activities allowed. Alas, love would prevail against all obstacles! Tom DID make a phone call to ask me to marry him. But first, let me tell you a little story about one of these obstacles. . . .

In the church-run college it was not permissible to get *serious* about a relationship until one’s senior year – and then, only in the second semester. Couples surreptitiously met as soon as they had an attraction and were constantly “dipping and diving” to avoid student government, teachers, or professors. discovering that a couple was getting *serious*. Tom and I easily avoided those situations, after all, we were thousands of miles and an ocean apart.

Time passed and eventually we were second semester seniors. As luck would have it, the choir from England was being sent to Pasadena for a big musical production. The chartered plane had a couple of extra seats, and I was given one of those precious seats! This privilege was given to me so I could visit my mother in Pasadena. She had become the house manager for Herbert Armstrong after the death of his wife, Loma. A whole book could be written about that in and of itself.

During that short time, Tom and I were able to be together within all college guidelines – no hanky-panky. We reconfirmed our love and commitment, and then I returned to England to finish my last semester. Within a short time, I received a card in the mail from him, saying that one of the eager-beaver ministers at the college told him that another woman had been *chosen* for him to marry. He was told she was from a more “politically connected” family within the church and it would be to his benefit to have her as a wife. She had been one of my best friends. It was shattering!

I was devastated. I went to *counsel* with my most beloved professor and high- ranking minister. He asked me to give him the card. (Dum-de-dum.) We later learned that it spawned a heated discussion amongst the ministerial ranks. The head of the church, Herbert Armstrong, ended the matter by saying, “we don’t choose mates for our students, period.”

Tom took the bold initiative to knock on the door of Mr. Armstrong’s Pasadena home. Mr. A graciously let him in and after hearing Tom’s story and request (I’m sure he had already heard the story), agreed to carry an engagement ring *hidden* in his luggage as he traveled over to England. He was leaving the next day!

That’s the story of how we got engaged. I’ll share one more quick story . . .

Later in the summer in August we were married by Mr. Armstrong in the stunning garden of his home – a beautiful, story-book wedding. After all the receptions, gift- opening, etc. we headed to Beverly Hills to the Beverly Hilton. Tom had checked into the room earlier in the day, bringing flowers, champagne, etc. He already had the key. When he opened the door to our wedding suite – there was someone else fast asleep in our bed!

The hotel finally admitted they had double booked and comped us another room. A bellman knocked on the door to the room we were supposed to have and retrieved our flowers and champagne. Thankfully the intruders hadn’t helped themselves. He then led us to our substitute room. We slept on a hide-a-bed couch pulled out into a bed for our wedding night. But hey, it was comped!

After a short honeymoon, we headed to Baltimore, Maryland to begin serving as a *ministerial assistant* to a wonderful couple. (note: that incredible man is now deceased and therefore couldn’t give his permission to use his name. With great respect to his remaining family, we are omitting his identity.)

## Tom’s Early Life

So far, this early part has been about my childhood. I need to back-track and tell a little of my new husband’s early life and upbringing.

Tom was the third child, and oldest boy, of wonderful, down-to-earth parents from Texas. His parents joined The Church when Tom was in about the first grade. He remembers going to Oregon when he was six years old to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. He learned early to work hard. His parents were farmers, and at some point, his dad was hired to work on a property owned by the church in Big Sandy, Texas. From the time Tom could walk and talk, he was following his dad to the fields and greenhouses. He learned to drive farm equipment and by his teenage years he was considered one of the very best heavy equipment operators in the church organization.

## His Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Ignited

At age 12, Tom wanted to start a little dairy. He approached one of the church members who had cattle and agreed to drive a tractor and bushhog for the summer. The payment at the end of the summer would be a dairy cow. Tom fulfilled his agreement and became the proud owner of a cow that was expecting a calf in the spring.

Calamity hit! They had a strong East Texas storm one night. Tom found his beloved cow dead under a tree that had been hit by lightning and fell across her. She was bloated. Both she and the calf were dead. He was back to square one (he would go on to learn this was not the last time in his life he’d be back at square one).

He approached the same farmer and explained his dilemma. He agreed to work the next summer doing the same thing but wanted to be paid IN ADVANCE (since he was older and more experienced) with a cow that had already birthed a calf. That deal was struck, and he was in business. He would go on to have a herd of 21 milking cows by the time he was ready to leave for college. He had a route of church members mostly, who delighted in the milk, cream, and butter that he provided from his dairy. Of course, most of the money was turned over to his mother to run their household.

But when he finished with high school and headed for college, the money from selling part of his herd provided him with the funds needed to buy a used car to get to Pasadena and to pay for his college tuition, room and board. His parents, obviously, didn’t have any money to help him. He knew if he was going to improve his life, it was up to him.

Tom’s college years were *mostly* peaceful. He was a student athlete and worked in various jobs on the campus to continue to make money to pay his way. He had a car, so he was in demand for transportation to beaches, mountains, Hollywood, Lakers basketball games and all sorts of other adventures. He was an *upstanding* student until he entered his senior year (he was one year ahead of me in college). The student body president that year was quite full of himself and imposed many rules and restrictions on the student body. Tom couldn’t abide more rules and regulations. He rebelled, mutinied, and got himself sent out *into the field* for a year as discipline.

While his *rebellion* needed punishment as an example for others, the ministers and leaders of the church had identified Tom’s speaking skills as excellent. They felt he could be *saved*. He had (has) an impressive, deep resonance to his voice. He credits his deep voice to calling cows all those years! But it truly is a gift, combined with the ability to articulate well (he had worked diligently for three years to *lose* his southern accent). He was destined to become one of their best ministers. If they could just get him to behave!

His year in the field ministry was a terrific experience. He worked with two really great mentors, who were supposed to be *whipping him into shape*. After a year he matured and was honed into a magnificent tool (mouth) for the church. It also gave me that extra year to *catch up* with him and be able to graduate in the same class (just different campuses). Here’s where our story as a couple begins.

# CHAPTER TWO: God’s One True Church

Tom and I were married the summer of 1968 after our college graduation. Tom had proven himself to be *worthy* after his year of probation in the field. We were sent to Baltimore where he was to serve as a ministerial assistant.

Again, he was sent to work and study under a strong leader in the ministry, who was tasked to continue to watch Tom and his rebellious nature. It was like the children’s story of Brer Rabbit – we were thrown into the briar patch that suited Tom perfectly. His boss and charming wife were fun, caring and very down-to- earth. His boss was a Regional Director over about a dozen states in the northeast region and eastern seaboard of the country.

We liked them both immediately and later that fall, Tom was ordained as a Local Elder in the church (that was the beginning rung on the ministerial ladder in the church). We were moved immediately to Richmond, Virginia, with me being more than eight months pregnant!

During our years in Richmond we shared wonderful, fun times. We camped and played with groups of ministers, we shared Thanksgiving and other church holy days (we didn’t believe in celebrating the pagan holidays like Christmas & Easter).

American holidays like Thanksgiving and the 4th of July were truly embraced by us, however. The ministers in his boss’ region were like a loveable motorcycle gang—a band of brothers!

Tom was soon ordained a Preaching Elder, the next rung on the hierarchical ladder and enjoyed the life of being a pastor to small groups. He was considered by outsiders as a *circuit riding minister*. We kept the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as our day of worship, the Sabbath as mentioned in the Bible. We drove to the Tidewater area of Virginia for Saturday morning services and then beat it back to Richmond for the afternoon services. It was exhausting – it’s a good thing we were young. My biggest chore during these days was keeping our little ones, as they came along, awake in the car, so they would sleep during church services. It worked only sometimes.

## Our Flock

The church members were among the sweetest and most devoted people I had ever met. Even to this day, they stand out in my memory as such wonderful, giving people. Part of the *culture* of the church was, however, that the members were to almost revere the minister in their area. People looked to Tom for guidance in their marriages, child rearing, financial decisions, and much more.

We often talked about how he didn’t like being in that position. He especially didn’t like to have to counsel prospective members about divorce and remarriage if there was one. While this was supposed to be a prerequisite to attending church, he often just “turned the other cheek” and invited them to attend if he felt they were ready otherwise. I have always thought that the situation with my mom being a *D&R* (as it was called by members and ministers) case had a profound effect on him and how he felt about separating families because of this doctrine.

Our first child, a son, named Joseph Bryan (after his two grandfathers), was born soon after we first moved to Richmond in August of 1969, two weeks before our first anniversary! He was born during a terrific storm spawned by Hurricane Camille. Such a welcome from Mother Nature!

This brings up another controversial decree from the church. The church believed in corporal punishment for proper child rearing. The dictionary says, “corporal punishment or physical punishment is intended to cause physical pain to a person. When practiced on minors, especially in home and school settings, methods include spanking or paddling.” It was recommended that in the early years of a child’s life, this type of child rearing would make the child more moldable and obedient. The oft-quoted scripture was, “spare the rod; spoil the child.”

This was another place where Tom and I differed from the *standard narrative* of the church. While we did spank our children, although sparingly, when they were young, it was something we ceased doing about the time they were of school age. It just never felt right. We were criticized by the management of the church for this position. We just kept finding areas where we didn’t see eye to eye on many of the teachings of the organization.

Our second child, a daughter, Tani Shera, would follow two years *to the day* later and be born on Joe’s second birthday (not that we kept birthdays either; they were verboten). She was named Tani, because Tom and I both had a Brothers Four LP album (from the folk song era of the 1960s) that had beautiful ballad called “Tani, My Tani.” Her middle name was a name of a daughter of Ephraim who must have been a woman of physical power for she built or fortified three villages which she probably received as an inheritance and enlarged for family reasons (2 Chronicles 8:5). She also arrived during a thunderstorm. A powerful foreshadowing of the life ahead for both of these brave and magnificent souls.

I’d like to share a little more of the story about the birth of our two incredible children. The church believed that childbirth was a natural occurrence that didn’t usually require hospitals nor intervention from doctors and nurses. We were confident that I was healthy and that the birth of our two children in a home setting would be smooth, safe and successful. In Virginia at that time midwives that had been designated by their county, mostly the outlying counties around Richmond, were still legally able to deliver babies in homes. We used these wonderful ladies (who were certainly getting up in age) during the deliveries of our two children.

Just a side note: Joe’s delivery took 56 hours and Tani’s was about two hours. On average it wasn’t too bad! They were both born healthy. weighing well over eight pounds each.

Life was so fun and exciting with our little growing family. Tom was soon ordained in a higher *rank* within the hierarchy of the church to a full Pastor. He had an assistant and the two churches under his guidance grew in numbers and devotion.

I mentioned earlier that we observed the Holy Days every year. As Tom progressed and grew in the ministry, he was called upon more and more to give sermons at these gatherings. The large Fall Festival – the Feast of Tabernacles – was held in Jekyll Island, Georgia for our region. It was a beautiful and inspiring place to visit, except when there were hurricanes!

The church rented and had professionals erect a large tent every year, because the island didn’t have a venue that would seat our crowd of about 15,000. People stayed in the motels and campgrounds around Brunswick and other nearby beach towns. Since it was fall and “off season”, the lack of summer vacation crowds allowed us to have *free run* of these towns, attractions, restaurants, and shopping area.

Jekyll Island is accessed by a causeway and is full of beautiful old mansions of the rich and famous from earlier eras. Little did we know then, of the momentous *secret meeting* that was held there in about 1910, attended by the richest banking families of the time. This we would learn several years later. The Federal Reserve, the Internal Revenue Service and an entire banking system was hatched there on that beautiful island. More is said about this in the companion book, *America’s First Freedom*.

Needless to say, we thought it was an island paradise. Tom was usually given an important responsibility as we prepared for this event and then during it to be sure all went smoothly. Usually, we arrived several days early so he could help with the erection of that huge tent. A couple of years he was in charge of security. He made sure the *big wigs* of the church were escorted on and off the island and protected during their stay. What he loved the most, though, was when he had a police escort to help him get off the island with tens of thousands of dollars of *special offering money* in the trunk of his car. Normally, he wasn’t too fond of the flashing lights of the police, but in this instance, it was quite a thrill! They carefully delivered the money to the local bank for deposit to the church account. The Fall Festival was definitely a highlight of the year for us.

After a couple of years of being a minister’s wife and being expected to fulfill the various attributes of “the virtuous woman” described in Proverbs 31:10:31, I was feeling so inadequate and unworthy. The teachings of the church weren’t exactly boosting to anyone’s self-esteem anyway, but this indictment on my womanhood was pretty upsetting. One year as the spring Holy Days approached, I felt especially unworthy and felt I shouldn’t take part in the Passover service because of all my sins and inadequacies. Tom was very soothing and understanding and tried to help me with this, but worthiness is something from inside. I just didn’t think I was worthy at all! A belief that was to shape much of my later years and personal growth.

One of the most inspiring and loving people during this time was our boss’s wife. Her example and her encouragement were priceless. I had met her earlier in my life, while I was still in high school at a summer camp where we were both staff. She had given me such unconditional acceptance during that summer, it stuck with me all my life. She is a very special woman and at that time I felt she was close to fulfilling the many aspects of the virtuous woman. She was my first important role model.

Although Tom enjoyed the ministry, he couldn’t ignore the entrepreneurial spirit that stirred in his soul. He was constantly buying and selling calves, toys like motorcycles, dune buggies, and other fun stuff. Once, he sold all his all his big-boy toys and invested in an 18-wheeler (a really big toy)! That big truck was going to provide us with more income to augment the small salary that he was being paid from the church. We hired a driver for it, and all went well until the gas crisis hit in the early 1970s. Our driver *abandoned* the truck at a Truck Stop in Pennsylvania.

Tom had to go get it and bring it back to Virginia. Shortly after we sold the 18- wheeler without realizing the dream it had been and could become.

We bought our own home, without the approval of the chain of command above us in the ministry. Headquarters didn’t want us *tied down* with a mortgage at such time as they might decide we needed to move from where we were. The church administration wanted us to be more flexible than that. We were putting down roots! They didn’t want the field ministry to put down roots or become too close to the membership of the area. Church members must be loyal to HQ first and foremost, not a favorite local minister.

Within a couple of years we (along with many of our fellow ministers) began to question some of the doctrines and, especially, the decisions-making and management style of the church leaders. As often happens with tightly-run organizations like this quasi-cult, the leaders do not allow or abide with any free- thinking by the members or even the field ministry.

Many of the ministers in our area, together, decided that some changes needed to happen. Memos, letters, suggestions, phone calls and other communications where the concerns of this group of ministers were voiced with our boss and Tom predominantly at the center. There were doctrinal differences, questions about how the tithes and offerings were being spent, and other issues.

As time marched forward, the prophetic1975 deadline loomed closer on the horizon. It was obviously not happening quite the way the church leaders had predicted. Of course, the official word from HQ was that we, the *sheep* had misunderstood – that date was never intended to be a *specific forecast*. Members became disillusioned. That date had been specifically called out for years.

We were sure that the church would take these concerns and issues to heart and respond favorably and that they would seek solutions. *But that is not what happened.* What did happen is that two of the top-ranking ministers from HQ were dispensed to meet with all of us (I say, “us” because I felt very much involved, even though the church was very patriarchal in structure).

Our home had a big enough basement and was centrally located in the Regional Area where our boss had authority, so the meeting was held in our basement. We had a Nutone speaker system throughout our home, so I was able to listen, even though I wasn’t invited downstairs with the men.

Our boss, Tom, and some of the others did a masterful job of expressing how they all felt, their concerns, and many doctrinal issues. By the time these two wonderful “high -powered” ministers left, they agreed with our guys assembled and pledged to take our grievances back. We were elated. These men were powerful ministers within the ranks, and we just knew they would be successful in helping bring some meaningful changes.

*But that is not what happened!* Upon their return to Pasadena, their bosses gave them some sort of an ultimatum. They would not call either Tom or his boss back. They just disappeared. We were to learn they had been given annuities and had to agree not to talk about what happened, becoming a *gag order*. They were literally bought off and went into a witness protection program of sorts. They have not been heard from by us again.

The church turned both barrels on all of us – on the sincere, devoted men that were in that room expressing from their hearts. We, Tom and I, were flown to Pasadena for a chat with Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert’s son. You see, my mother was in Herbert’s house every day and privy to his visitors, conversations, etc. We knew we needed to *protect* her, which was one of the reasons we even agreed to come to HQ in the first place.

We listened to what was said. We *were threatened* with a huge file of *supposed* affidavits from church members alleging all sorts of misdeeds committed by our boss and Tom. We *were bribed*. We could gather our family and friends and make use of one of the church jets to go anywhere in the world for an all-expense paid vacation. We *were cajoled*. We could come to Pasadena for a *re-treading*, Tom could teach some classes and Garner Ted even offered that he could continue his flight instruction using church planes. He could get his commercial license, if he wanted (he had his private license and instrument rating already).

We *were tempted*. We talked about it all the way home on the plane. But it really wasn’t a hard decision for us, in the end. We could not go back to that structure and control. We were ex-communicated, but we had to be free!

## FREE AT LAST!

So, free we were, but what the hell does a former minister do for a living?

Leaving the church was not quite as easy as I make it sound here. Remember both our families were in the church – parents, brothers and sisters, and their families. Our only friends, really, were the other ministers, dear friends we went to college with, and our wonderful little church congregation.

Each minister and each congregation member had serious pressure applied by those remaining in the church to stay faithful to the church. We were ousted, marked, shunned, and ostracized. The many church members who had been so kind and helpful to us for years, were now shunning us in the grocery store or on the street. It was a lonely and soul-searching time.

My mother found there was extreme tension working for Mr. Armstrong. One day he pointedly asked her, “Are you going to be loyal to the church or to your children?” Her answer was, “I am going to be loyal to Jesus Christ!” I was proud of her for that answer.

We began to find which ones of the ministers were in the same frame of mind as we were. They are some of our dearest friends to this day. Church members were confused, hurt, and unsure of which way to turn and who to believe. Many believed the pack of lies that were leveled against us. Many did not and chose to leave the organization.

People had been so used and abused by the church, they really just wanted to take a break and care for themselves and their families for a while. The Radio Church of God had changed its name some years earlier to the Worldwide Church of God.

Remember, I mentioned that tithing was required and a second 10% was to be spent on the annual Church Holy Days, expenses getting to and staying wherever those larger meetings were held. Anything left over was to be given to the church to help the widows and fatherless be able to attend these events. Extra offerings were gathered up at Holy Day meetings and anytime the Work faced a financial need or crisis whatsoever (like buying a new business jet?).

Now, you might say, why so much for the widows? To a large extent this was because of the church doctrine that if a person had been married, and then divorced and remarried, to be members in good standing the couple must split up and not live *in sin*. Men who were involved with this situation were to just take care of themselves and give child support. Ones who joined the church probably took on this responsibility. But the vast majority of the D&R (Divorce and Remarriage) cases were women joining the church and were being pretty much abandoned by their non-church-member husbands because of it. It was *not* one of the church’s better doctrines. The nature of the D&R (as we called Divorce and Remarriage) doctrine created a massive number of *spiritual widows* and fatherless children. I know in our case; my father was so resentful of the church that he didn’t feel a very big obligation to finance the separation. Looking back, I can understand how he must have felt.

One of the things we noticed during this time of upset and chaos was how dependent people were upon the advice and guidance of the ministers. They were almost unable to make decisions for themselves! We would learn later in life how predominant a trait that tends to be for most people, particularly ones who’ve lived with someone else giving them all the answers. You can read more about this in our separate book, *America’s First Freedom*.

Our shattered little local Richmond congregation struggled for a year or more. We met with some of the members in our home. People gave so much financially to the church, while letting things like dental care, or maintenance to their house was left unpaid and neglected for so long. It was time for them to take care of themselves. We could not disagree. The small group that gave donations as they could and would was not enough income for us to live and raise our family. Tom and I needed to find something else to do. So back to the question that started this chapter—What does a former minister do to earn a living?

We weren’t going to join another church organization, not that any would really have us with our differences in beliefs and practices. One thing we did know, and we spoke about it often, we were determined this was not going to ruin us. We would survive and thrive!

**CHAPTER THREE: Life After A Cult**

It took a few years to realize and admit that our life with “God’s True Church” was actually with a *Cult*, a fact that was hard to admit to ourselves. Here is *my* personal definition of a cult: Anytime you let someone or *group of someones* decide what you should believe, how you should live, and who you should associate with OR a person or group who takes the place of your own *inner knowing and guidance*, you might be in a cult.

You probably won’t find this definition in any dictionary. Using this definition, I have found over time that many groups and/or organizations fill this criteria. It has served me well over the years. I also have come to believe that the cult members are the ones who make it a cult. If you don’t give someone, or something, control over your thoughts, beliefs, and actions then you aren’t participating in a cult.

Cults usually have charismatic leaders with strong personalities and opinions, but they need followers to make it a cult. The followers have *cult-thinking*. They believe so deeply in the *infallibility* of the leader that they give up their own will, independence, and free-thinking.

The burden is on each of us to keep ourselves independent and free-thinking. This was the very basis of an organization we later formed. But before I go there, let me get back to the story.

**Building a Life After Being a Full-Time Minister**

As we faced a future that contained far fewer friends and family, Tom set about to figure out how to earn enough money to support our young family. He tried his hand at several things. He became a licensed real estate agent. Joining a local agency, he got his first couple of listings and rather quickly found out that other agents were competitive and unwilling to help him–in fact, he even had a couple of them try to steal his listings.

He realized *he* had a bit of an inner conflict with being both a listing agent and a selling agent. That was the way to make the most commission, of course. However, he just couldn’t promise someone that as their listing agent he would get them the most for their property and, simultaneously, as the selling agent he would help the buyer get the property at the lowest price possible. He became so uncomfortable with this he decided to look elsewhere for a profession. Many fine realtors don’t feel this conflict, however.

He met a really nice guy who wooed him into the life insurance business. After going through all the tests and certifications, being trained in the products offered by that particular company, he set out to sell insurance policies to anything that drew breath, wiggled or had a pulse. Everyone needed life insurance and he was going to be the one to help them get it. He sold so many policies that he won all of the awards possible for a new agent and had plaques to prove it.

Before too long he began to feel an inner angst about selling *death*. The only way anyone really needed these policies was if there was a death, calling for proceeds to be paid to the beneficiary. In the meantime, there were monthly premiums to be paid, ongoingly, providing Tom with residual income.

He also had become aware of what a poor financial strategy Whole Life is for most people. Unfortunately for the client, it pays the highest commissions. People are smarter to have Term Life policies and invest the difference in what the premiums cost in something that will pay back higher rewards that what are part of the Whole Life policy.

Being new to the business world, we liked the idea of residual income. But he became increasingly unhappy with the process of going into people’s homes and selling a policy for everyone that had a pulse. He just couldn’t do it. He decided to look elsewhere.

At this point, I want to say that many fine people sell real estate and life insurance. They are good people and see no conflict the way Tom did. Everyone’s mind works differently. We intend no negative judgment for anyone who has chosen these worthy professions. They just weren’t right for Tom *at that stage of his life.*

## Free Enterprise and Residual Income

About this time (approximately 1976), Tom had a very serious motorcycle accident. He broke his wrist and had road burns over a large percentage of his body. While he was immobilized recuperating, he was introduced to a product that was revolutionary and new to the market–***Slender Now***. It was a weight loss system consisting of protein powder and some other nutritional items, replacing two meals per day, making a complete, healthful program. People had terrific results. This incredible product had not been seen in the marketplace to that point in quite this way. It worked well. Pounds melted away. People felt fabulous, full of energy. Everyone wanted it. Tom, himself, lost a lot of weight and people around us asked what he was doing. Selling it was *easy*. He was a walking billboard!

The company that produced this product decided to use the direct selling model (also rather new in the 1970s) called *multi-level marketing* or MLM, later to be called *Network Marketing*. In this model each distributor could sell directly to customers, but also more distributors could be recruited to join the group and build a team, hence the *network.* This model cut out the normal marketing or distribution lines used to sell products. There was no advertising, no huge distribution centers, no sales hierarchy or middlemen (managers, supervisors or vice-presidents). From the company’s point of view, the expense of commissions wasn’t paid out until the sale was made. It was a win-win for both the company and the field network of distributors.

We had found our home! We immediately shared the idea with some of our dear friends who had been in the ministry, so that they, too, could find financial freedom after leaving the secure income of the church ministry. It was a wonderful blessing for all. Our lives were enriched financially, our health improved, and we met many wonderful, down-to-earth solid people all around the country.

## Why Multi-Level Marketing (MLM)?

We hadn’t really heard much about MLM. As I’ve mentioned, we were young and naïve. The ministry and church *business* were all we had ever experienced, except Tom’s venture as dairy farmer in high school. When the folks came to our home and exposed us to the product *Slender Now*, they also explained how much money we could potentially make by becoming distributors or representatives. It would depend on us and our efforts, as it is with everything. We were amazed at what the potential was. Tom knew he was a *natural born salesman*. When you think about the teachings of the church we had just left, you understand. If he could *sell* that package, as described in chapter one, he could certainly sell a wonderful weight loss product.

At that time in history (1976), there weren’t very many MLM companies, not like today, 40 years later. The most well-known was (and still may be) Amway. There were others, but in general it was a small part of the marketing space. The idea with MLM is that a company can introduce their product or products to the marketplace without having to have a huge advertising budge upfront. With MLM, you pay commissions once the product has been sold. You eliminate middle-men and expensive advertising. The advertising is done through word of mouth (always shown to be the *best* type of advertising) by happy customers and distributors.

We not only had to introduce people to a new weight loss product, but we had to *sell* them on free enterprise and the Multi-Level Marketing System. It was a new and exciting concept. People were eager to start their own home businesses and earn extra income with excellent products. We found that learning to think positively was an important skill, one that Tom innately possessed. We began reading books and listening to tapes that would *feed our minds* with inspiring and uplifting information. Tom was naturally able to teach and share this important mindset with others.

This type of marketing/distribution was and is an excellent method to expose consumers to products that are new and need to be explained or demonstrated. In the last 10 to 20 years infomercials have largely replaced this educational system to help convince people they want and need the product. In 1976 infomercials on TV weren’t a *thing* yet. For many companies just getting started, traditional advertising brought huge up-front costs.

We realized that the marketing/distribution system called MLM was *up and coming as a marketing strategy* and by building a team of distributors we could build a very nice income for our family. We loved the product. We loved the marketing system. We loved the positive, exciting people that we met while involved.

There are many very real benefits that continue today in MLM (now also called Network Marketing, Affiliate, or Relationship Marketing):

* A small amount of risk
* The market loves new, innovative, GOOD quality products
* Residual income
* Virtually unlimited income
* No employees to hire (no government forms, etc.) Everyone is an Independent Contractor
* No inventory, thus rarely stocking or shipping
* Low overhead costs
* Use of maximum leverage
* Portable
* Attainable freedom and lifestyle

It wasn’t just the money, but the TIME freedom and personal fulfillment of an excellent lifestyle that made this company and its MLM Affiliate program the best business opportunity for us.

One of the biggest values to us turned out to be how much emphasis was put on having a positive attitude. We began to read books and listened to tapes about positive thinking, personal motivation and inspiration—as well as business and sales-oriented material. We realized that what we filled our minds with would produce the results of success that we desired. It was, in a way, like opening a door to a whole new world. Tom was instinctively a very positive person. I, on the other hand, was and continue to be more analytical and reserved. Those books helped me begin a *journey of self-discovery* and improvement/development that continues until today as my personal spiritual awakening.

***Slender Now* Destined Not to Last**

This terrific experience ended up being rather short-lived. There began to be media coverage of people dying from a diet of *liquid protein.* Well, that wasn’t our product, but people got confused and scared from the media headlines. Sales began a downward dive.

About this time, a doctor had developed a program using boiled beef bones (really just gelatin in liquid form with sweetener and coloring added). He gave it to his patients who were grossly, morbidly obese and called *The Last Chance Diet: When Everything Else Has Failed*. It was the last chance because these folks who were so overweight also had many other ailments besides just their obesity. They were close to ending their lives from all this bad health. It was drastic–a last chance.

Many people lost weight and improved their health, but a number of people died from heart attacks and other terminal ailments while on that diet. It is reported that about two million people were put on this diet and about 60 died. But *Slender Now*, while not the same at all, was a casualty of all the negative press.

People were frightened by all the news coverage. There was little we could do to counter this bad press. The company went bankrupt.

This was our first taste of how destructive the media could be if they chose to take a position and push a narrative *en masse* to the unsuspecting public. We were later to learn this even more poignantly. We would see it again and again. Unfortunately, over the years since this time of the late 1970s MLM, Network Marketing and other direct selling opportunities have come and gone with many of them creating a bad taste in the mouths of average people. Today is it nearly impossible to find truly great, innovative products, and companies with ethics and the ability to succeed in the crazy marketplace.

Understandably, our income took a major dive (as did all the other distributors’ incomes). It was frustrating, but we realized, once again, we needed to look for a new home.

## Introducing Uncle Sam

As a result of our short time with this exciting and lucrative network marketing company we were faced with a new challenge: income taxes!

Remember, we had been in the ministry for most of our relatively short married life. We had always filed the required returns, but usually received a refund due to the taxes that were withheld from our employment situation. Now, for the first time, we were self-employed entrepreneurs and completely ignorant and naive about the power of the IRS.

They said we owed a lot of tax. At this point, we were not aware of the benefits of having a home-based business. We were terrified about what might happen. If we had had the tax preparer that we’ve had now for over 30 years, we wouldn’t have worried at all. We would have owed little to no taxes for that income we earned during that couple of years of residual income. Home-based businesses carry many legal deductions and benefits, even more so back then.

We were *sold* on having our own independent distributorship and working together from home. We began a series of experiences with many other companies, searching to find something that we loved as much as Slender Now and could earn a substantial income at the same time.

About this same time, we were given a cassette tape by one of the other top producers within Slender Now who was also feeling the crunch of lost income and IRS’s hot breath down their collar. I hardly remember now what was on the tape, but it began to stir a realization about how far our country had come from its original founding principles.

With that stirring, we began to dig a lot more into our early American history. We were amazed to learn that, due to the First Amendment of the Constitution, churches, by law, could be established and run without government interference. We began researching and personally meeting with individuals who taught us about our Constitutional Republic and what it meant to all of us.

Having been in a religious organization where the leaders lived *high on the hog* but were never bothered by IRS rules and regulations to any great extent (as far as we knew), we could easily believe that the rights and protections of the First Amendment could apply to us or anyone who called upon those rights.

A major light bulb went on!

We began to tell others about this exciting, little-known protection under the Bill of Rights. Our schooling, because we both attended the church grade and high schools, had been *sorely lacking* in the full scope of the founding of our country and sacred rights and sovereignty afforded us as Americans. Because the church believed and taught us to be “**in** this world, but not **of** this world,” church members did not vote or get involved in politics at all. I remember very little being said about politics except from the pulpit the leader of the church was bemoaning the fact that a Catholic (John F. Kennedy) had been elected President. The church believed the Catholic Church was the *Great Whore* in the Book of Revelations.

We came to champion the marvelous miracle that was the forming of this country. We studied and embraced the quotes from the Founding Fathers and how much the early revolutionaries in our country sacrificed to launch this great experiment call a *Republic*. We were awed and amazed! But we were also totally nonpartisan.

With this realization, another historical event (series of events) came to be revealed to us. In our studies we saw this great country was founded on God-centered, Biblical principles. (Remember, we were still not long out of the cult, still had so very much to learn, and filtered our perspective through Biblical standards.) We also learned that an opposing, diabolical force was in play that was determined to keep us from experiencing our full sovereign potential as Americans.

## Nasty Forces At Work

It is difficult, today, some forty years later, to recreate how and what we learned and, more importantly, how we *felt*. In the interim so much has happened to shape our understanding, assumptions, and realizations. I’ll try as best I can to tell the story we found in our research. The internet didn’t exist in the late 70s. Our sources back then were papers, magazines, and books. This information was considered *alternative* back then and even called *conspiracy theories*. Of course, it still is today, even though much, if not *most*, of it has proven true.

We learned there exists an organized “Shadow Government” of extremely wealthy and powerful individuals and families that control the banking systems of the world. These secret societies date way back in history. These societies include the Illuminati, Skull and Bones Society, The Knights Templar, The Bilderberg Group, The Freemasons, the Rosicrucian and Jesuit Orders. There are many more, but these were the main ones we learned about then.

The Illuminati (which, by the way, was formed about the same time as our country, 1776) stood out as the main threat, including groups like The Council on Foreign Relations. This CFR group was referred to as an *invisible government* and considered to be the most powerful organization of its kind. Founded in 1921 this globalist international organization has been a driving force behind the formation of The New World Order. Today it’s called the “Deep State” as a catch-all term.

The goals, teachings, and objectives of these types of groups we began to understand, have had a powerful influence on the politics of this country and even the entire world. We didn’t know much about them, but everything we read made us believe they were not seeking the best for the average American, but rather to line their pockets by controlling the world’s financial system. All wars and international events were orchestrated by them, for their profit.

To say the least, this was terrifying. The more we read and researched, the scarier it got. Finally, we concluded that *we* really couldn’t do anything about these powerful banking forces. It was depressing to think what they were doing to our lives, but what could be done? We now know that we didn’t *begin* to understand how powerful, far-reaching, and malevolent these forces were.

We didn’t realize at first how deep and evil they truly were (far more than just the IRS) nor second, how powerful and godly forces were making secret, concrete plans to rid our world of such evil. At that point, it just wasn’t our fight. There was very little we could do. Besides, who wants to be called a “Conspiracy Theorist?” (We’ve learned since that the CIA invented that term to discredit anyone who wanted to learn more, specifically about the assassination of JFK, or about anything else they didn’t want average people to be looking into!)

All I/we could do is try to be our best possible selves, to raise our kids, and have a happy, healthy family. Tom and I looked to the future without bitterness, but rather with optimism. We had viewed our time in the Church, and then in Slender Now as major life learning lessons. We continued our search for personal and religious freedom in our lives. We continued to seek personal, religious, and financial freedom! We, and particularly ME, were also learning how important *spiritual freedom* truly is.

The rest of the sad, but intriguing story continues in our companion book *America’s First Freedom*–but with a very HAPPY ENDING! We didn’t know then how deep it went, only that there likely was a Shadow Government that had a vice grip on us as Americans and it was unpleasant to even think about.

**CHAPTER FOUR: A Calling**

When we realized the extent and depth (we were able only to see the tip of the iceberg) of what was happening in our country, our communities, and families–we wanted to try, in some small way, to help. But how?

About that time, we met a gentleman, an attorney, who informed us of how many people were already benefitting from becoming ministers and forming their own church. This concept, initially, was very foreign to us, as to most. Many people even believed it was legally and morally *wrong*. We knew better. There was an innate knowing within both of us that the perfect solution for religious and spiritual expression was to have the freedom of crafting one’s own set of beliefs, activities, and structures.

Having come from a religious and ministerial background, we realized what was entailed in running a church. God doesn’t have requirements for the ordination and establishment of a church. He only looks for a pure heart and someone who desires to do good spiritually in their own life and community.

In our zeal to help others learn about their Constitutional rights and protections. The light bulb began burning brighter. We found what we believed was the perfect solution. A church. We would form a parent church that would help others form their own church entities and set up to follow the guidelines of not-for-profit churches under the IRS code. The icing on the top and the hook to grab someone’s interest was the realization that one could save or totally eliminate their bottom line of taxes due using this concept.

We began to research and talk with those who knew more about how this could be done and began to prepare a structure whereby we could ordain ministers (nobody can say how this process should be done) and set up chapters within our parent organization. We talked with lawyers and accountants and found it was a perfect solution.

## The Birth of Liberty Ministries International

We developed the systems, the structure, and the supporting, ongoing communications to help our members live with freedom, individualism, and self- expression as the core of their church. We believed that anyone who had a sincerely held personal belief could express it through their church, even a home- based church.

We envisioned that a person starting this type of organization needed to identify his or her own deeply considered, sacred purpose for religious or spiritual expression. Once that organization was established, the individual or family had many benefits spiritually, socially, and financially. In the next chapter we’ll discuss how Liberty Ministries grew and flourished. You can also read more in the companion book, *America’s First Freedom*, about how Liberty Ministries became a powerful force for good in people’s lives.

Our belief was that individuals who were truly dedicated to making a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities could become empowered to be better citizens and fulfill their God-given charge “to love thy neighbor as thyself.” We knew the despotic taxation situation in our country kept most from doing much to help others outside their families. Everyone basically was a slave to earning enough to feed, clothe and house their family.

We also knew that many local churches and charitable organizations so often existed to maintain the staff, physical property or facility, and other holdings or programs. The national organization’s obligations often came first before they were able to do much to help others. We knew that our ministers and organizations would be freer to find the need and channel money that formerly went for taxes, money that could be better used locally to help one-on-one those with needs.

We contacted people that we knew (many came from the church we had left a few years earlier) and laid out the entire vision. The idea electrified some of them as it had us. People shared with others, who shared with others. People donated what they could for the formation of a new chapter (let us state here that we gave away many chapters for those in need and supported them fully, no matter how much they could donate). Some people donated every so often as they could. We also were generous in donating back to the chapter/church who had referred others. We were trying to help all become more financially supported as they built their chapters and, at the same time, helped us grow nation-wide.

We envisioned a new church set up according to the instructions and documents we provided. The minister would receive an ordination certificate (Tom was an ordained minister and had full authority to ordain others). As much as possible we wanted our chapters to have the tools of organization to give confidence that they were as *legal and legitimate* as any other church on the block.

We put together many resources, such as a binder (much like a corporation has when it sets up) with instructions, places to record and store the documents generated by the minister and his Board of Directors. Our intention was to provide on-going support and guidance on how members could run their church chapters and how they could help in their communities. Chapter members were encouraged to fill out a form on a semi-annual basis that documented what they were doing to fulfill their deeply held religious purpose. This form would, of course, be retained in their church organizational binder kept in their church office.

This was a very exciting period. We established an office in the western part of Richmond, where we lived. We hired a few staff to help with the administrative activities. We began producing materials for our ministers to use for proselytizing and sharing our vision. We attracted talented and dedicated people to join us. We had a CPA to help be sure we had all the i’s dotted and the t’s crossed. We hired a writer to help us produce the high-quality literature and ongoing support for our chapters. We hired a full-time graphic artist and computer expert to help us develop our image and prepare for the future growth. Tom recorded a weekly radio program, *A Time For You*, that could be played on the local stations of our members.

Many stations donated the time, and some charged a nominal amount to broadcast. Many of our chapters were sponsoring this inspiring program.

## Learning How We Are Different (DiSC)

In his travels around the country, Tom met a young man who introduced him to a system of understanding how we each accomplish results, how we are similar, and how we are different. It was called the Personal Profile System (or DiSC) and was produced by a company from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tom had this wonderful man come to Richmond and administer this tool for our entire family and staff.

The resulting realizations and understanding learned as a result of each person responding to this *psychometric learning instrument* was astounding. The Profile’s byline was *Understanding Self and Others*. Each person selected their own choices of how they saw their own personality and the result was a graph plotted on a chart of highs and lows in four main areas: Dominance, Influencing, Steadiness, and Compliance–hence, D, I, S, C.

We learned that those four main styles exist in all of us to varying degrees along a continuum of developed and underdeveloped strength. We were thrilled and mesmerized by how accurate these results were. When given to our children (they had a children’s version that was figures illustrating various feelings using body language) it fostered an understanding and acceptance of how all our personalities are different and yet perfect. There is *no one right way to be*.

Our staff also benefited, because we understood and were more accepting of each other’s various moods, actions, and idiosyncrasies. We did not have a lot of strife and contention among our office staff prior to this, but by adding this perspective we found even more harmony.

Tom and I went to a training and were certified by the company to be facilitators of this great instrument. As time went on, we used this knowledge and these tools to help a lot of companies, sales teams, families, churches, and organizations to be more effective and harmonious in their dealings with each other. At this time a link to respond to this type of personality survey is being hosted today on our website [www.libertyministries2021.com](http://www.libertyministries2021.com/) and is offered to explain in depth our experience and understanding of this wonderful tool.

In 1980, our plans included adding this tool as part of our training for our minister’s and their families and communities. It was (and still is) a great *ministry* in and of itself! We envisioned many of our ministers becoming certified as facilitators using this tool and offering workshops and counseling in their own area to help individuals and families understand themselves and others more beneficially.

## Back to the LMI Story

1979 and 1980 were at the very beginning of the desktop computer explosion. That market hadn’t really developed yet. We rented a *word processor* and a talented lady to run it. It took up a large part of our reception area and ate a big chunk out of our monthly budget. The *desktop* part of computing wouldn’t come until several years later.

Tom traveled extensively and went to any area where a group of people gathered. He told our story and showed our slideshow. Word of mouth was the only method of spreading our message. Because folks saw the commonsense wisdom and purity of what we were telling them, they were eager to join us.

## The LMI Vision/Code

***Love and honor God above all else.***

***Respect yourself and family as God’s special creation.***

***Honor and love your neighbor as yourself.***

***Exercise your rightful, sovereign authority in dealing with the government!***

Our first ministers were ordained, and their chapters formed, in early 1979. We held several gatherings where ministers came to Richmond for training and fellowship. It was thrilling to see the interest.

All through the rest of 1979 and 1980 we continued to build and grow. to develop better systems, materials, and support for our chapters. We were a young organization spreading at a grassroots level. We knew what to do! This was our wheelhouse. Our time in the Church had given us the knowledge and tools about running a first-class organization.

## Purposes of Liberty Ministries

Here were the stated and published purposes of the Parent Church, Liberty Ministries:

* To celebrate the dignity of each individual
* To help all people everywhere discover their unique individual and sacred religious purpose in life
* To show how individual freedom – particularly First Amendment religious freedom – is being threatened by increased government control
* To teach the values of Free Enterprise, the Constitution, the family, and the church
* To oppose the evils of socialism, Communism, atheism, and excessive government power
* To help re-establish the divinely inspired sequence of authority: God first, the individual second, and government last
* To help individuals enjoy the fruits of their labor more abundantly
* To promote peace, love, joy, reason, and good will to everyone everywhere

Here is poem written by one of our members and published in our newsletter, *The Liberty Line* in 1979:

*You are your country’s keeper; the government is but you.*

*You are the weave of the fabric; be it weak, be it strong, be it true. Yours are the hands that will guide her; yours forever the blame.*

*If her mantle be covered in glory; OR if her mantle be lowered in shame.*

--Pauline G.

Some of our member’s activities included:

* *We recently sent 40 Bibles to a missionary in the Philippines for his students. We meet every Monday at our church at 7:15. We have a lending library and sponsor “A Time For You” radio broadcast. I performed a wedding ceremony in Baltimore on 5/3/81.*
* *We give vitamin supplements free of charge to senior citizens, along with food baskets to those in need.*
* *We have now been active with our church for over a year. We are providing help for those who have been denied and unable to get any help from the government programs.*
* *We work with those who have alcohol problems, as well as our prison outreach programs.*
* *Our focus is to provide assistance to unchurched individuals seeking religious knowledge and instructions. We provide counseling.*
* *We have a constant and on-going Meditation class, as well as a class on the “Cycle of Life.” We go door to door with our ministry.*
* *We visit two different elderly homes and nursing centers providing weekly counseling and companionship to those with no families.*
* *We recently leased a billboard sign saying, “Put God First!”*
* *LMI has been instrumental in helping us develop our ministry and has afforded us a better understanding of our God-given religious freedoms as written in the Constitution/Bill of Rights.*
* *Our church sent the pastor, Dennis D., to Liberty Bible College for the fall term where he completed three semesters of courses.*
* *Our church has helped battered wives to receive help and aid from government and other sources.*
* *Freely distributed 100 circus tickets among three youth organizations.*

These are just a few of the types of comments that our ministers had written as a report back to us of their religious and charitable activities.

Unfortunately, the IRS really didn’t care about any of that!

# CHAPTER FIVE: Why Would IRS Attack?

Tax collectors have not changed their tactics in the last 2,000 years. If you believe that the tax man of 1980 practices a more noble and respected profession than his counterpart of Jesus’ day, then you certainly don’t “know thine enemy.”

Publicans were often selected by Jesus as examples of how God can forgive the most rotten of sins and the lowest of sinners. Jesus taught us to love our enemies, and He used publicans as the chief example. He also showed his righteous fury by over-turning the tables of the money changers in the Temple.

As we have learned since, we certainly didn’t know this back in 1980, we were, in fact, dealing with an arm of the “Shadow Government” and not a real part of the government we thought we were dealing with. We believed we were being ruled by the Constitution of our Republic.

The IRS can lie to you. They can steal from you. They can act like thugs and bully you. They are under *no* requirements to deal honestly and fairly. They do *not* see themselves as public servants, nor subservient to us, the taxpayers. This is especially true with the CID (Criminal Investigation Division). We didn’t realize that the entire system was set up to never give average Americans a fair shake. The Justice Department (particularly when it comes to anything to do with money) is in practical application, the *injustice* department!

We had *no idea* who we really were dealing with and how desperate they were to be sure that a concept like ours did NOT gain any respectability or wide-spread acceptance. We were an existential threat! We had no idea how wide and deep this went. I’ll bet most aren’t aware of much of this either

## The Internal Revenue Service ATTACKS!

We were armed and protected by the Bill of Rights, right? We thought we were. How misguided and naive we were.

Alas, we caught the attention of a local newspaper reporter. In our naivete, Tom agreed to spend some time with him. He was a *wolf in sheep’s clothing*, asking *sweet* and leading questions. We had not had experience with the media and what they can do until this point. The article that came out in the paper was totally unlike how Tom remembered the conversation. A couple of weeks later two IRS agents came to the office. At the time we were traveling, so an interview with them wasn’t granted. We’re not sure what kind of questions they may have asked of our receptionist, but we were sure they got plenty of *information* anyway.

Just before the Christmas of 1980, we were notified that an official criminal investigation had begun. Liberty Ministries, we, and our staff were the targets.

One of the important things we had learned during our time involved in Multi- Level Marketing a couple of years before was the power of the mind and of our thoughts. Positive thoughts attract more positive. We knew we needed to stay positive and trusting in God to get us through this difficult road ahead. We doubled down on reading books and listening to tapes that gave us hope, inspiration, and a feeling that “everything works for good for those who love the Lord*.”* We held onto principles like these to see us through and hopefully keep our family from suffering too much.

The IRS criminal investigation was grueling. Our friends, neighbors, families of staff, ministers and trustees were being contacted, grilled, and threatened. People were terrified. Many were threatened to be included as targets of the probe if they didn’t cooperate and give the agents what they were looking for. Several members who stood up and claimed their rights were summarily arrested and had news articles written. One lovely and sweet lady had an article in the local Richmond paper saying that she “attacked the agents with her knitting needles” – which of course wasn’t true. But that’s why they always have two agents on a call, so they can corroborate each other.

We were saddened and frustrated. There was nothing we could do. Our lawyers warned that we shouldn’t talk to anyone the IRS was contacting so we couldn’t be charged with impeding the investigation. By this time, we had closed the office space in western Richmond and moved the files, furniture, and equipment to the basement of our home.

Not long after this one of our former staff members called and asked to come speak to us. Because he was being called to testify before the Grand Jury, we were cautious about speaking to him. He asked us a lot of questions—about how we were doing financially, etc. He seemed to be concerned about our well-being. Little did we know at the time he was *wired* by the IRS/FBI and there were many agents waiting at the school parking lot near our home. We knew we hadn’t done anything wrong. This fellow asked Tom point blank what he should say to the grand jury (Tom smelled a “set-up” immediately). Tom told him to tell nothing but the truth and to *pray about it* before he went in, asking God for the most benevolent outcome for all.

They then had more *scared-into-cooperation* members lure us away from home one evening soon after that for dinner, while an army of agents descended on our home for a search and seizure. Wires were cut and door frames were broken as they performed their “duties”*.* Our sweet German Shepherd dog was chemically subdued.

We (my two children and I) arrived home from dinner to find the agents there. Tom was conveniently out of town. Every light in the house was on. Bugs, drawn to the lights, filled our home! The agents required us to sit quietly until they were finished. Upon needing to use the restroom, we found we were required to be *accompanied*! It was ridiculous, intimidating, and very frightening. I am sure that is exactly the effect they were trying to accomplish. I called our lawyer, but he was not able to do anything to stop it, of course.

After they finally left, I closed and locked the doors, feeling very violated. I went to the basement and surveyed the office. Papers were strewn everywhere. File drawers were hanging open and files missing, and in the paper shredder were thick stacks of paper that they *tried* to shred, but being too thick, it just jammed the machines. But my question was and still is: *why were they shredding anything?*

Many of those papers were reports from our various chapters recording their religious and charitable activities for the past six months. We could only guess that those papers were not *helpful* to the case they wanted to build. Clearly, they were trying to destroy what would be exculpatory evidence for our defense. I was too naïve and inexperienced to realize I needed to take pictures and preserve the evidence. I would learn later what a big mistake it was.

The next couple of years were some of the darkest and hardest years of our lives. The IRS opened a Grand Jury Investigation. We learned that the Justice Department literally goes out on the streets to recruit people to sit on a GJ. The jurors usually are people with very flexible schedules (such as people who were unemployed, retired, or homeless) and who can dedicate a few days a month (or more) for up to 18 months. Mostly the jurors hear from the IRS agents who have done their “investigating” for the past several months (or more). It is a totally one- sided story.

One of the most disconcerting things was the amount of newspaper coverage during the time of the investigation and the subsequent Grand Jury. There were over 25 articles – often just repeating information from previous articles about how insincere, devious, and criminal we were. If one read the papers at all, they surely would have believed we were fraudulently trying to bilk people out of money on a scheme that we *knew* was wrong.

Many of our ministerial members, staff and friends were called before this body. We were instructed by our lawyers not to contact or speak with anyone called to testify, because that would immediately be construed as *obstructing justice*.

If the Grand Jurors are unable to return their indictment recommendation by the end of the 18-month period, they must be dismissed. In our case, they dismissed the first Grand Jury and soon after empaneled a second one. The findings, *facts, and opinions* of those who testified before the first Grand Jury, were then read to the second one by the IRS agent, with the title “special agent to the grand jury,” a totally fictitious and prejudicious title invented on the spot. This was highly unusual and considered illegal by many. The second grand jury took many more months to reach the conclusion that the IRS and the Justice Department were seeking. In the end the Grand Jury, as most Grand Juries are, were cajoled into *rubber stamping* the charges to indict.

After almost three years we finally were notified that we were being indicted and arraigned on various charges, ranging from wire fraud and mail fraud to conspiracy to help third parties evade taxes (although no third parties were charged with evading taxes). They just threw alphabet spaghetti against the wall and hoped they’d get a conviction on some of it.

And, of course, they did. We were not financially able to hire the very best attorneys for our case. Our local criminal attorneys most often dealt with drug dealers and the like. The MO for working with the government is to plea bargain the cases so as to not have to go to court. Both Tom and I were required to have separate lawyers with the hope that one of us (me) could be enticed to testify against the other. Twice as much legal expense. Twice as much falderal. Twice as many chances to get a plea bargain struck.

We were not at all interested in plea bargaining. We would need to LIE and say that we knew what we were doing was wrong. How could we? We were positive we had the Bill of Rights as our defense!

An interesting little sidenote here: The day after we were indicted, we led a large workshop with Safeway Store Managers from the mid-Atlantic eastern region.

There were about 100 of them and we administered the Personal Profile System (the DiSC talked about earlier) to them all, while building a seminar about Understanding Self and Others around this activity. Each attendee was given the profile to complete for themselves. Once they were on the way to “Know Thyself “understanding, we then discussed how they could interact with their team and employees better. We were on schedule to be hired to train Store Managers nationwide, until the indictments happened.

Before the trial, the government wanted us to *stipulate* that papers in a HUGE stack, maybe thousands of pages, were accurate and honest. It would have taken several weeks to go through them (and pay the lawyers to sit there) one by one and agreeing that this was someone’s signature, or that paper was a document that we produced in our office, etc. Our lawyers advised this was *unnecessarily time-consuming* and therefore would make our legal bills increase significantly. They advised we just *stipulate* that all were accurate and what the government said they were. You can imagine what a can of worms that turned out to be! But once it was stipulated to, you couldn’t go back and challenge it. But it saved the precious time of the court. What a BIG MISTAKE!

## The Trial Begins

Jury selection was the first grand event in the courtroom. We were learning about the legal system like someone drinking out of a firehose. The legal terms alone required having a law degree. Nothing meant what it would mean in plain English. Picking a jury is a circus in itself. It would be a very big stretch to say that it was a jury of our “peers.” The courtroom is a whole different world using a foreign language.

Finally, the trial began. The prosecution took three weeks to present their case. Witnesses were paraded before the jury to testify (as the they had agreed with the government ahead of time, so they would to keep themselves out of trouble). Those who were part of Liberty Ministries were considered “unindicted co-conspirators.” This meant that if they didn’t say what was agreed upon, they could be moved to the “indicted” column. Our key staff were included in the indictments, but most agreed to a “plea bargain.”

Those who plea bargained agreed to a lesser charge, smaller fines, and shorter prison sentences in exchange for giving the necessary testimony to build the case for the government. All of us were scared and unsure of our futures. Most had young families and professions that could be ruined by this action. We were sad to see how these folks turned to “side” with the prosecution, but we really couldn’t blame any of them. They had to do what they had to do. We understood, but it didn’t make it any easier. None of us were actually prepared to face the enemy that was at the root of these proceedings.

At the very beginning of the actual trial, and in front of the jury, the judge stated that it was mandatory that *no testimony would be allowed supporting our religious background or first amendment rights regarding religion!* He stated that this was *only* a tax case and that was all that was to be entered into the record. The trial went on to be a nightmare and a blur. Again, we found that normal vocabulary wasn’t used in the court. We didn’t truly understand much of what was going on. When the government rested our case, we were advised by our lawyers that they hadn’t proven us guilty. They advised that we just not give a defense and let the jurors come to the conclusion that there was not sufficient evidence for conviction.

We prayed together and felt that might be the best course to take. Tom really wanted to testify, but our lawyers explained all the pitfalls and landmines that were involved with that. If we had put on a defense, anyone that we brought forward as witnesses would be in jeopardy (because many of them were on the list of co-conspirators). If we testified in our own defense, while we felt that we had done nothing wrong, we would soon learn how the prosecutors could deviously twist and turn whatever was said. It was a dangerous road to go down. We decided not to take the stand in our own defense.

After closing arguments, the judge gave the “instructions to the jury.” They were reminded (as had been said at the very beginning) that they could NOT take into consideration anything about this being a ministry or a church, that the First Amendment was not on trial. This was a tax case, pure and simple. He said that if it appeared that any tax avoidance or fraud was committed and testified to, they were required to convict. It was bone-chilling almost four weeks.

It took over three days of jury deliberation. Finally, it appeared that it was not unanimous and at least one person was holding out for not guilty. That individual was soon after excused for medical reasons. We don’t know that whole story by any means even to this day, but the rumor was that he was holding out for non-guilty!

After that person was excused, it didn’t take long for the conviction to come back. We were guilty and were to be sentenced in a couple of weeks. Prior to returning for the sentencing phase, we submitted hundreds of letters of endorsement and support for our character and good intentions. When we were before the judge, he mentioned that he read them all and was impressed, but a new law had been passed and signed into law just a few weeks before that gave him *no discretion* in the sentencing he was allowed to give.

The government has “estimated” several million dollars were defrauded in tax revenue, except that not one person was charged and convicted of defrauding the IRS. Because that number was so high, his hands were tied about the length of sentence. He likewise had no discretion to allow us to remain free on our own recognizance pending an appeal. Tom received a five-year sentence, and I was to serve 18 months. The sentencing was mid-November 1984.

Our lawyers were aggressively filing motions for the judge to dismiss our conviction based upon the conduct of the government. As written in the Richmond- Times Dispatch, Friday, Nov. 16, 1984, Federal Judge Warriner said that the conduct of the government in securing the indictment was, “wrong, wrong, wrong.” He went on to deliver a blistering lecture to the federal authorities with “complicity in outright lies” for failing to adhere to the code of professional conduct for lawyers, and with deciding “to err” where they should have reached for “the higher level of responsibility” to which the government is held.

Judge Warriner said, “the government abused the grand jury process when it improperly disclosed criminal proceedings from that body to civil authorities engaged in an independent investigation of Liberty Ministries.” He went on to say, “the government’s use of an IRS agent as a so-called special agent of the grand jury may well have *infected* the grand jury.” And, he further said, “the agent’s use of that title may have caused confusion by potential witnesses he interviewed for appearances before the grand jury.”

The government improperly granted immunity to prospective witnesses for their appearance before the grand jury. The government flirted with ethical violations for initiating contact between an informant and people, including us, who were targets of the investigation after we had retained counsel. Our attorneys were not present when the contacts by this informant were made and when the information was gathered through taped conversation via body wire. This violated the constitutional right to counsel.

This was referring to a time when one of our former, trusted staff people called and asked to come see us at our home. We had been indicted and we had retained counsel by then. As I’ve said before, we were so very naïve about these legal matters (especially criminal legal matters), we welcomed him to our home. We didn’t realize that he was wired and that a bunch of agents were about a quarter of a mile away in a school parking lot, listening, and waiting for either of us to say something they could additionally add to case they were building.

We encouraged our friend to “pray earnestly about it and to always tell the truth.” The information gathered by this informant was never something they were able to make the cornerstone of their case.

Although the federal judge chastised the government severely, he did not dismiss our convictions and he urged us to take our case to the higher courts, which we could never afford. This same newspaper said in this same article, “How close the Williamses came to having the indictment dismissed because of the conduct of the government may never be known.”

One of our co-defendants and former staff members reported, “In my sentencing in January 1984, the judge actually admitted he was naturally biased, being paid by the federal government, but still he gave me the maximum according to the guidelines . . . he later admitted he probably gave me too harsh a sentence.” Can you believe that? He admitted he was “naturally biased, being paid by the federal government!”

All of this seemed so unbelievable and unfair in 1984, and for years after. As I have realized from my present-day research and revelations about what and who was really running our country, we really shouldn’t have expected *justice*. We should have realized that the government, partnered with the local and national media would do everything, whether legal or not, to prejudice the jury pool, to scare and intimidate witnesses, to lie and twist the truth about who we were and what we believed and were trying to build with LMI.

First of all, there actually should not have been any income taxes, IRS, or prosecutions for trying to legally avoid paying any more than was necessary. We didn’t realize how much of an enemy of the people the IRS truly was. The whole thing was bogus! The 1776 Constitution and the Bill of Rights were relics of our history – the Corporation of the United States established in 1870 had actually taken over and the *shadow government* was in full force with their tools, the Federal Reserve and the IRS to keep all Americans from their real sovereignty! (See *America’s First Freedom* for details on this.)

But let me tell you, it worked on us at that time! We were so sufficiently punished, ridiculed, and penalized that we wanted to just live our lives as obedient little soldiers and always do what the government wanted. For a while anyway. That mentality isn’t in our DNA, though!

I reported to the women’s Federal Correctional Institution on New Year’s Eve of 1984 in Alderson, West Virginia. More about that adventure in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER SIX: Off To Federal Prison

*“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the Sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country. But he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.*

*Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, That the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.*

*What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value.*

*Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods. And it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.”*

“The Crisis No. 1” [1776] Thomas Paine

Preparing to head off to prison is a surreal experience. What can I take? How will I survive? How will my kids survive? Will I just “exist through it? Or can I make it an empowering experience? How will I keep my attitude of and belief in freedom while locked up?

I had about six weeks to ponder these facts. Tom and I (again, naively) believed we could file some kind of motion or appeal. that would either delay my having to report to prison or overturn the conviction altogether!

Historically defendants had been allowed to remain free on bond until all their remedies were exhausted, including motions, appeals, etc. These could take several years even. but, as luck would have it, in the fall of 1984 (days before we were convicted and sentenced) a new Federal Act went into place. (Thank you, Senator Joe Biden!) This new law not only precluded the defendant remaining free until the appeal was ruled on, that law also took the “leeway” from the Federal Judge and *required* minimum sentencing through their guidelines.

Any delay was not to be. I had no choice but to report to the gates of the women’s Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Alderson, West Virginia on Dec. 31, 1984.

The routine of checking into any prison is probably about the same in all institutions (although I know nothing about any but the *federal* system). I was strip searched, a pretty degrading experience. Because I had “self-surrendered,” I was spared some of the indignities to which others who arrive in custody are subjected. I later learned this, but at the time it felt pretty humiliating.

We had been given a list of items I was allowed to bring in. This time luck was on my side. Because I reported before midnight December 31, I was allowed to keep the things I brought. If I had reported the next day (or even just after midnight), I would have had to send almost all of it home!

In looking back, I can’t even say how much it meant to me to have my own clothes, books, a cassette player and tapes, a rug for my room, my own sheets, blankets, and towels. My favorite thing was my own coffee mug that I have to this day and drink out of every morning.

The grounds of the FCI (Federal Correctional Institution) Alderson were spread over a really pretty “campus” with no barbed wire or fencing of any kind. We could literally just walk away. A few tried it but didn’t get very far and then were not allowed to be in a lower security “camp” for the rest of their sentence. That was enough of a deterrent to most (and definitely to me). No walking away. It looked like a college campus in many ways. Two-story dormitory-style buildings (holding about 50 women per building at that time) were dotted around. I was assigned to the building for women who had less than two years to go. It was the freest of all the dorms with the presumption that if you had only that small amount of time left to serve you would behave better.

The first two to three weeks, approximately, were an orientation period. I attended certain classes, had physicals, dental exams, took tests, and filled out endless reams of forms. I remember that I really disliked and chaffed under the institution calling me “the Offender” on their forms. It was one of the biggest affront to my psyche.

In the beginning, I was in a room that would hold about fifteen women. There were just two of us in there at that time. The population was much smaller than are presently incarcerated in this same facility, I’m sure. Thankfully, I was finally issued my own room. It was small, but had a single bed, desk, and a small bar on which to hang clothes. They used hot water heat. We had no control over it, of course, but it had an old-fashioned radiator under the window. It was winter. The window would crank open. I was to learn that setting items outside the window (in winter) was a refrigerator of sorts. The hot water heater (which was hot to the touch) served to warm things up slightly. I later learned the fine art of “penitentiary cooking.” More about that later.

At that time (not allowed now-a-days), my husband could have either flowers or a fruit basket delivered occasionally. Within the first days I had a beautiful bouquet of red roses arrive. Let me say, those roses lasted longer than any cut arrangement I have ever seen. Four weeks later they had not wilted! Even the Correctional Officer (CO) who entered my room to perform the required “count” of persons mentioned how very long they were lasting. I took it as a sign from God that I, too, would survive.

Fruit baskets were awesome and exceptionally well-received. Avocados (being fruit) were often included and were so much appreciated. I’ll add more about that when I talk about penitentiary cooking.

## My Employment

I was assigned to work in the Administration building because of my secretarial skills, I guess. I had really hoped to be placed in the greenhouse, but later found that working inside in the Administration area was truly a blessing.

I was first sent to a small back office near the women’s restroom on the second floor. This was almost like an area all to itself. It had many windows looking out on the campus and was rarely disturbed, except when an occasional staff person wanted to use the restroom (this wasn’t often because they had other areas that weren’t mingling with the inmates).

I was really in heaven! I had little to do each day; a typical government job, huh? I was to type 4-part (old NCR forms) invoices for the purchasing department. That department ordered everything that the institution needed to keep running via 4-part invoices. You would think I would be busy all day, but that wasn’t the case. The most challenging thing was that I really wasn’t that great of a typist. When my mistakes became so many (you couldn’t really make changes to the other pages of the NCR forms), I would have to scrap it and start over. That was what kept me the busiest. Ha! Much paper was wasted because of my typing skills.

This wonderful situation allowed me time to read. I was on a full-time quest to learn all I could about my inner or *spirit self*. I was hungry to learn and devoured any and all of the books that my husband could get and send me. I spent a great deal of time in introspection and contemplation. I was fascinated with discovering who I was, what life was about, and what my purpose might be. I was determined to discover my worthiness. It was a powerful learning and exploring time. I had learned to meditate about the time we were indicted, and I used this tool to nourish myself.

## Amazing New Friends and a Couple of Angels

When you’re institutionalized like this you are assigned a Case Manager and a Counselor. I received wonderful people in both these positions. My Counselor became a long-remembered friend! She was a wonderful, compassionate, and caring person. She guided me through much of the treacherous waters that lay ahead. She was Angel #1.

Another fantastic angel (Angel #2) was the CO (Correctional Officer) that was assigned to the building I was housed in. I later learned that they rotated throughout the camp in different buildings every 90 days. He had just begun his time with our building the first day I was there. He was the kindest, funniest and, again, most caring person. He warned me several times of individuals he saw who were “cozying up” to me for their personal gain. This was common to play on someone’s naivety and try to get money sent to their account or other favors. Scammers are everywhere!

I began to learn that one needed to be very discerning and careful with the other “guests” of the prison system. Everyone proclaimed their *innocence* and built quite a story about how they were victims of abuse and a wrongful system. This officer went by his last name Crockett. I was soon to learn that not only did I have two Angels watching over me, and they were a married couple!

As I mentioned, they became people that I stayed in contact with for years after they retired, and I was released to go home. I will forever be appreciative of their presence and concern for me while I was there.

I met many women, who were there for many reasons! In the library, where I frequented often, was one of the girls from the Manson family. She had not been one of the ones who participated in the murders, but she loved Charlie (as she called him) and proclaimed his innocence and purity. It was a little hard to swallow, but she seemed harmless enough. She had been convicted of threatening to bomb a federal judge, as I remember. I could understand her feelings on that regard although I would never go that far, personally!

Another woman who was also an infamous Manson family member worked outside in the gardens. She was truly a nature lover. Both these women (who were called “Red” and “Blue” among the Manson family, and hence in the prison population continued it) were actually very quiet, peaceful, and spiritual. I wasn’t sure what kind of spiritual, but I felt no malice or danger from them in any way.

Also housed there were several women who had been protesting war and other environmental issues. They were convicted of things like showering blood or writing graffiti on missiles. Quite interesting! One of the women, a Catholic nun, received a few visits from Martin Sheen, the actor, and an activist in the peace movement himself.

After I’d been there a while, I developed friends who also lived in the same building. We often walked the campus, ate our meals and watched the occasional television show together. Barbara, from North Carolina, and I found we have much in common. She had a very short sentence and was gone after four months. I taught a small group of women how to meditate and use the Relaxation Response and she was one in the class. We kept in touch via phone calls and email afterwards for many years.

A few more very special women showed up and we developed a friendships. I was surprised by how difficult it was for me when they left to go home or to a halfway house before me. It was strange to have these emotions about people I just barely knew. You have an odd bond with someone with whom you’ve been in prison.

Hard for others to understand, I’m sure.

One of the most special ladies, Patricia, was a little older than me and she taught me to crochet. We sat in her room for hours on end (she was on the lower level, right next to the CO office. We regularly were visited by Crockett, who told jokes and keep us laughing for hours. One evening he snuck up outside the window (which was open because it was summer) and jumped up, shouting BOOO! Pat and I both screamed and jumped. Then we all bent over in laughter for a good 15 minutes.

## Penitentiary Cooking

Incarcerated women (and men too, I would later find out) are ingenious about finding ways to cook and feed themselves and others. This is true of women everywhere. We learn to make do. I was taught the fine art of using the hot water radiators, the popcorn popper (which had a hot plate to pop the popcorn), hair dryers, and other amazing things we had at our disposal. Microwaves weren’t a thing yet. Some had been at it for years could cook amazing meals, treats, and snacks. Never being much of a gourmet chef myself, I didn’t really do much of the cooking there either, but I sure befriended some of those who were good cooks!

We had to learn to smuggle items from the dining room. Smuggling was a fine art that I had previously known little about but learned quickly in that environment. We mostly smuggled butter, peanut butter (although we could buy that in the commissary also), fruit, and veggies (especially things we couldn’t get in fruit baskets that family sent in). Tomatoes were a biggie. Pats of butter fit nicely in one’s armpits. (Don’t think too hard about that picture.)

Women who worked in the kitchen, the garden, and the butcher area were vital conduits for providing many groceries to help with our cooking adventures. Whatever they could easily smuggle out, the ladies would find a way to turn it into something very scrumptious! Let me add here that I became much more adept and honed my ability to *smuggle* during my time in prison! It is a fine art that is developed for survival.

I was so fortunate because my wonderful family made sure that I got a fruit basket (with avocados) regularly. Armed with these goodies, I had no trouble befriending those who could turn them into gastronomical delights. One of my all-time favorites, with all available through our commissary, were graham crackers with peanut butter and raisins on top. Yum! The food from the dining hall really wasn’t too bad, just not very imaginative. In a four-week cycle, the same menu is served on the same night of the month. I think it has probably deteriorated even more in the years since due to funding issues, overcrowding, and complacency.

Popcorn is the staple of prison cuisine. Women made popcorn plain or with various toppings. It was amazing. Chocolate candy was available to be purchased through the commissary and therefore some delightful and amazing popcorn snacks appeared.

## The Absolute Hardest Part

My wonderful husband, Tom, made the 4-1/2-hour drive from Richmond to Alderson every week and when he could, more than once a week. The visiting room was near my building and when notified that I had a visitor–whether in my room, or more often, at my work desk–they would call me to come immediately. Visiting days were Thursday through Sunday. Tom and I talked and talked during these visits. I shared what was happening with me and he told me about the legal battles (and computer snafus) he and our lawyer were fighting.

Just prior to reporting for this government-paid vacation, we had rented our first IBM personal computer. It was huge and only had 10 MB of memory. We used the little discs (an upgrade from the floppy discs we had with other equipment) to remove material from that internal memory and free it up.

One time when Tom was visiting me, he told me with a slight tear in his eyes of a long, detailed motion that he and the lawyer were typing up. As my memory recalls, he had an unexpected power outage before he saved it to memory and *lost it all!* Such were the tales he often shared about life at home without wife and secretary. Ha!

Those visits were wonderful. The very best ones were when our children came with him. It made for a long, exhausting day therefore the kids didn’t come as often as their dad did. Nothing thrilled me more! The afterglow lasted for hours, even days. Although, mixed with that joy was quite a pang of longing as I watched them head to the parking lot and get back into the car.

It is quite satisfying to be able to relate how stellar our children were through this whole event. They were young teenagers, with all the fun of junior and high school going on. They, instead, had to grow up into adults too early and handle life with incarcerated parents. They were champions and grew into marvelous, special beings! As I write this now, they are married with children of their own, of course. What a fantastic blessing they’ve been to Tom and me—and grandchildren are really *the very best icing on the cake*!

## Beginning My Spiritual Journey

*There often has to be a rude awakening before there can be a Great Awakening. (author unknown)*

Apart from feeding myself with the best foodstuffs we could dig up, I was ravenously hungry for spiritual nourishment. I referred to this earlier. When we first learned we were being indicted, after the fear and dread hit the pit of my stomach, I somehow realized that we needed more *tools* to help us through this ordeal. My instincts were sharpened to realize that we (I specifically) needed to learn more coping skills and spiritual tools to deal with the coming onslaught.

During the years since leaving the church, I had been thirstily reading all kinds of self-help and personal development books and listening to tapes on these same subjects. As you remember, the feeling of unworthiness was deep in my psyche. Personal development led to the beginning of *a spiritual awakening* of how worthy I (and all of us) really are.

I had heard somewhere that someone greatly benefited from taking a Jose Silva Mind Control class. This seemed like the kind of tool we needed, a way to control our minds and keep ourselves as positive as possible. I had heard of people who went through traumatic, life-changing events like we were facing with the results being alienation from family, divorces, poor health, and messed-up children. I was determined that no matter what was thrown at us, we needed to come out the other side well-rounded, with love and understanding for all of us.

This class was just what was needed, for me at least. I learned the “Relaxation Response” as it was called by some, using deep breathing to allow quieting of the raging, negative thoughts and find inner peace. This skill would serve me well.

I mentioned that I read voraciously during this period. I spent time using my *mind control techniques* to meditate and establish a relationship with my Inner Self. I began to realize how worthy I was. After all, the government, the trial, and being incarcerated had done a real number on my already struggling self-worth. But God wasn’t finished with me yet.

I came to realize they could lock up my body, but not my mind. My intensive reading and introspection allowed me to look at my previous beliefs and *dogmas* with a totally different perspective. In reading books that stretched my mind and beliefs, I occasionally came across a concept or teaching that was totally opposite to what I had been taught and always believed. Something inside me clearly said, *Don’t discount anything. If it stretches you too much, just place it on the top shelf of a closet in your imagination*. *You can always revisit it some other time if you wish*. This gave me much peace with concepts that were just a little too far out for my current understanding. I still use these techniques to this day.

One such concept was that of reincarnation. My religious background had shunned this idea. I was living this life with the belief that it was my one and only shot at becoming perfect or saved. As I read some material about reincarnation, a thought came to me very clearly: if I could live *after this life* (going to heaven or wherever the reward was), then why was the possibility of *having lived before* so improbable? This was something to *put on the shelf in my mind* and consider later.

After several months of intense delving within and opening up to my Inner Self and the divine source energy, I had a very strange, paranormal-type experience one day. I had been reading some book (I don’t remember the title) and I felt drawn to go into the little bathroom right behind my desk. I gazed into the mirror, and as I did, I felt my eyes morph into the eyes of an all-loving, wise being that exuded the deepest and most heart-felt love I had ever known. I gazed for a while in pure rapture, then I got a little scared about what was happening. When I did, my eyes returned to their normal reflection, but the experience moved me beyond explanation. I felt I had been communicated to, without words, about how much I was loved and cared for. Tears flowed down my cheeks for several minutes. I don’t think I’ve ever really been the same since. I no longer felt so *unworthy*.

My mind, heart, and beliefs were being stretched. I realized how much I really didn’t know and that I would have a life-long journey to keep myself growing and evolving to become the best I could be. This would continue long after I headed home and back to my life with my family.

When we were sentenced and given our dates to report to prison, the judge had kindly staggered our sentences, so that one of us could be at home with our kids most of the time. Why he chose to overlap our sentences by three months, I don’t know, but he did. So, when I was three months from coming home, Tom was required to report to a men’s institutional camp in Petersburg, Virginia. This facility was in the Richmond area, so thankfully, for the next few years it didn’t require long drives to visit him.

Arrangements were made for our children to be looked after by a very nice lady who was a former member of the same church we had left earlier. While her heart was so generous, her particular idiosyncrasies nearly drove our young teenagers to distraction! After much pleading with their dad when they visited him, it was decided that they would basically stay by themselves with extra help and supervision from both a family friend and Tom’s brother and family who also lived in the Richmond area.

It became more important to me than ever to be released to go home and reunite our family once more!

**Heading Home At Last**

I left a few weeks before my dear friend and crochet buddy, Patricia. We kept in contact for several years, however. She was released about a month later.

I had an 18-month sentence and earned good time through my behavior, as well as some extra work I did. I once was asked to get onto a cherry picker and wash the outside of the windows of the Administration Building. I happily volunteered for this, earning me ten days of good time and $30 bonus in my commissary account. I was to remain in Alderson until the end of October.

As you can surmise from this account, I held no long-standing resentment or ill- feelings for my confinement. I made the best of it. I really do have many very fond memories. I was blessed and never harassed by employees of the Bureau of Prisons or by other inmates. I learned very early a universal principle: ***You get back what you give out.*** Or, as the Bible says, “you reap what you sow.”

Eventually, it was time for me to go. After finishing eleven months of incarceration at Alderson FCI, I was released to a half-way house in Richmond, VA. I was nearly home. In fact, all I had to do was report to the house before 10:00 pm and stay until 5:00 am. I could then leave, drive myself, and be home early in the morning with my kids for the day.

With Tom now incarcerated, I needed a source of income. He had finished a business enterprise allowing me enough income for a few months. I needed to find something else, and quickly. My brother-in-law had a friend with a house cleaning business that she wanted to sell. He kindly made the arrangements for me to take over her clients, although it needed additional ones to provide enough income. It was a start and one I am eternally grateful for. For the rest of the time that Tom was incarcerated, the kids and I cleaned houses and offices to provide the needed funds to live on.

When I first returned home to my two *orphaned* teenagers, we spent a lot time just hugging each other. It was so wonderful to be home and have that whole experience behind me. I had left two young teenagers and came home to two very wise *adults* eleven months later.

One of the first things they wanted was to make some kind of *home-schooling* arrangements. They were not interested in returning to the structure of public school. We researched and found a correspondence course school out of Chicago that catered to entertainment families, missionaries, and the like who traveled or had reason to not attend *normal* school. It was called the American School and was perfect for them. It is still in operation today.

They enrolled (which satisfied our local county school system) and proceeded to thrive scholastically. They received their assignments through the mail. They talked by phone to a teacher whenever they wanted. Best of all, they could do their schoolwork whenever they wanted.

I had explained to them that I wasn’t equipped mentally or emotionally to be a home-school teacher. I expected them to motivate themselves to finish high school. I wasn’t going to nag or remind them to do any of it. But I didn’t need to. They were fantastic! They could usually do all their required weekly work in one or two sessions and then put it back in the mail to their teachers. It worked well for us.

While it was a while before Tom could come home and complete our family, we were well on the way. Thankfully, we could easily visit him often, because of the proximity of the prison camp to our home. We were very grateful for this. I used my newly honed smuggling skills to sneak in steak biscuits, Cortaid, and other items he needed and wanted. These were considered contraband, but we never brought drugs, a file, guns or anything illegal.

While I had been in prison, Tom often stopped by the local metaphysical bookstore in Richmond to pick up books to bring or send to me. After I got home, I became quite an avid frequenter of this bookstore. It felt like going to the well and having a nice, long, satisfying drink of water when I went there. I am not sure whether Tom or my kids could understand what it meant to me, but they were very patient and indulging.

Over time, I took many classes, read many books, added the book store to our list of offices/buildings that we cleaned, and became friends with the owners, staff, and others who led classes and gave counseling sessions. It was a very nice circle of non-judgmental, positive people. For a few months I designed and produced a newsletter for the bookstore. I even taught a few classes myself. I developed some life-long friends.

One day when the kids and I were doing a *deep clean* at one of our clients’ offices (we stripped, mopped, waxed and buffed a large meeting room floor), Joe started feeling poorly. He had manhandled a commercial buffer around the floor, and I certainly understood how he might feel bad; until you get the hang of them, those buffers are quite a handful and tend to have their way with you. Many of you will know what I am talking about.

He proceeded to have several days of vomiting and being very sick. We took him to the doctor, which we rarely did, and from blood tests it was determined that he was in kidney failure and needed to go to the hospital immediately. This became a very scary and life-changing time for all of us.

The final diagnosis was that he had end-stage renal failure. I became very frightened when told that his only hope for a more *normal* life was to have a kidney transplant. I marshalled all my alternative sources. I just knew that he could be healed through prayer, herbs, or something in order to avoid a transplant operation. I sought help through energy work and practitioners in various alternative healing modalities, all while the doctors proceeded with plans for a transplant.

In 1987 kidney transplantation was becoming almost routine, but the best hope for success was to receive a kidney from a living relative. That way the blood type, tissue types, and other markers made for the best possible match. I had a totally different blood type, so I was ruled out. Tom, on the other hand, had the same blood type and four out of five tissue markers that matched. He was almost a perfect match. One big challenge: he was incarcerated.

The Bureau of Prisons had allowed Tom a one-day furlough to go through all the tests and then had indicated that he could also be furloughed to the hospital for the transplant when the time came for it. We thank the BOP for this!

There was a hitch, though. Joe had a persistent low-grade fever, and they weren’t willing to proceed with the surgery until the source of that fever was identified. Six weeks went by, and they were still puzzled about it. One day, when they were beginning the dialysis process, an old, retired doctor of Nephrology was wandering around. This doctor had helped start the transplant unit at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond where Joe was being cared for and he often just showed up and looked around at what was going on. He immediately recognized what he thought might be the problem.

It turned out Joe was allergic to the plastic filter in the dialysis machine. Every time they hooked Joe up to the machine, it would trigger this allergy. Once they replaced the plastic artificial kidney with a stainless steel one, the low-grade fever went away. An angel had just *happened to be on hand* and gave us the solution to this challenge.

Now the transplant could be scheduled. Joe was released to go home for a while and the surgery was scheduled for a couple of months later. Joe still had to go in for dialysis every couple of days, but he was able to be at home while we waited for him to gain some weight and strength. The details were arranged between the hospital and the Bureau of Prisons. The stage was finally set.

I had come to peace with allowing Joe’s healing to come through the capable hands of surgeons, nurses and his magnificent nephrology doctor. I proceeded to get the yarn so I could pass the time by using my new-found skill at crocheting Joe an afghan during his surgery and recovery.

The transplant happened on June 24, 1987. What a day! Of course, it started very early (you always want your surgeon to be alert and well-rested). Several hours into it I got a message from the surgical team saying all was successful and that the recipient was *peeing like a racehorse*, which was great news! With kidney failure people often don’t make much urine and require the extra fluid to be removed during the dialysis process. Dialysis is a wonderful, life-saving invention, but it is hard on the body in so many ways.

Both the donor (Tom) and the recipient (Joe) came through with flying colors. Today, transplants are more *microscopic* in nature. Back then, Tom had a long incision, and thus a scar now, running from near his belly button around almost to his spine in the back. They needed a large incision to be able to get enough tubes to be able to reattach in Joe. Joe recovered well and was released about 5 days or so after the surgery. They had him come in for blood work to watch the situation for several weeks and months. Blood work continued to be used to monitor how well the new kidney was doing. All was working perfectly!

Tom was recovering as well. The hospital and his urologist released him to go home to recover for a few more days. After a day or so, Tom got an urgent phone call from the prison authorities saying that he was being charged with *escape* and needed to turn himself in immediately!

We were incredulous. We immediately got in the car and took him to the prison camp in Petersburg. As it turned out, the camp warden had been moved the week of the transplant. The one who had been there and had given Tom permission to go to the hospital, have the transplant, and then follow doctor’s instructions about recovery not only was gone, but he had not left *written instructions or permission* about all of this. Of course, Tom didn’t know that until he got back to the camp.

Because he was charged with escape, he was immediately sent to the “hole” or the higher security (prison within prison). Remember, he had an incision around the entire side of his body. It was healing, but they informed him they would not attend to it, because it wasn’t something that happened on prison grounds.

He was stuck in a sweltering hot (summer in Richmond is hot and humid) cell with no airflow. He had a steel bench for a bed with no mattress, although a mattress might not have been very sanitary. He was left in this limbo/purgatory for 18 days, stripped of his good time, and his single person cube, living instead in very restricted space with no medical attention.

Finally, they moved him back to the camp, with all his privileges and seniority removed. There happened to be another inmate in the camp who was a former member of Congress from Idaho. Once he heard of Tom’s experience, he contacted a member of the press with the Washington Post. This reporter, Jack Anderson, contacted the prison to request to interview Tom.

The prison officials went berserk! They asked Tom to refuse the interview, because by law they couldn’t forbid it. Tom requested to talk to him. The resulting newspaper article relaying the entire story was subsequently syndicated and published in newspapers all over the US. Needless to say, the escape charge was expunged, his seniority regained, and his good time privileges reinstated. They couldn’t return his 18 days in solitary confinement, but at least he was healing and able to have his single cube back. It makes a huge difference to have those small privileges while incarcerated.

While Tom was more than happy to give his son a kidney, he just never dreamed what would ensue afterward! Prison officials were much more solicitous of his health and wellbeing for quite a while. It was still a very impersonal bureaucracy, but he definitely had an easier time for the rest of his incarceration. They sure didn’t want him bringing any legal action against them, as others were urging him to do, or invite any more reporters to visit.

It was amazing how the prison system snapped to and changed their hardline position once the bright light of the newspapers was shone upon it. Jack Anderson was a popular syndicated columnist and much that he wrote got picked up and published by newspapers all over the country. We greatly appreciated him and Rep. George Hansen for the part they both played in getting some justice out of the justice system. May they both Rest In Peace.

The summer progressed with far less drama and both father and son healed well. Tom still had about a year and a half left on his sentence. The kids and I continued to run our little cleaning business. We prepared for Tom’s return in early 1989.

It takes some time to adjust to life on the outside after one has been institutionalized for years or even months. It is strange to be back in private cars, to be able to go shopping or anywhere, really, that you decide you want to. It takes some time to rebuild your confidence and *de-program* yourself from the rules, restrictions and regimentation of institution living. In one case I found myself, stopping and waiting from someone else to take keys and open the door I was standing before. These are little things, but mind conditioning is very powerful. I realized that we all need to guard against letting ourselves be programmed by others who seem more powerful. But we were determined to rebuild our lives to be stronger and better than before. We knew we were starting from scratch, from zero, but at least we were all together and “the only way was up!”

Starting over was to become quite a theme in our lives henceforth.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: Starting Over Again. . . and Again

With our eternal optimism, we began trying to rebuild our lives, counting on positive results. One thing is for sure: Tom Williams has never let anything destroy or deter his positive outlook and attitude. Failure, or even just less than spectacular results, have never been an option. I am blessed to have had that kind of influence in my daily life. By nature and personality style, I am more cautious, and it is a little harder for me to expect the best result. But I have definitely learned to be more optimistic. It is something that I believe I have acquired from years of living with an “eternal optimist.”

When Tom got home, he was a bit of a “disrupter” (a popular term today) to the little family routines we had developed. He jumped in and helped us with our cleaning business in the evenings, all the while looking for something that would produce far more income.

Through the next 12 to 18 months we tried to build a couple of direct sales businesses, with varied success. An old friend told us about an opportunity that was just beginning with a gentleman named Charles Givens. Chuck was an entrepreneur and TV personality, one of the first to perfect the “infomercial” concept of advertising. Chuck found that if he offered interesting, slick, well- produced 30 minute “informational documentaries,” narrated by the familiar voice of Robin Leach from “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous” TV series, people would listen and were fascinated. He would give 30 minutes of content and “teasers” about his financial products and invite the listeners to attend a presentation in a local hotel or venue. The presenter (someone like Tom) then further explained and “pitched” the personal financial program that Chuck, and his company had created.

This friend told us about a new direct sales program that was just being offered whereby individuals could buy this program, without attending a hotel presentation, and could become marketers of the program as well. We recognized the value and validity of this information and the opportunity it afforded. In the program people were given personal financial guidance that improved their lifestyle through better day-to-day financial decisions. In the program, advice was given about better choices for insurance of all kinds, car buying, investing, and many other subjects that affected a family’s financial stability.

After many months of earnestly working with this wonderful program, we sat down with our checkbook and realized that we were making a decent amount of money, but that our expenses were eating up most of it. Tom needed to travel around the country to make presentations and, in those days, we also had much larger long-distance phone bills and other expenses.

We decided to look for other opportunities to add to this one. That’s when we heard about a company that was able to “resell” long distance phone service for AT&T at a much lower price than one paid the AT&T company directly. This seemed like a real *no-brainer* to us. At this point in time, the long-distance phone service had been de-regulated, and many companies were able to provide long distance on our land lines much cheaper. It was competition at its best. A large portion of the US population had been using AT&T for years. Many were hesitant to go with a company with a lesser-known name. Sprint and MCI were two of the most popular, but most people were leery of using them, even though they were cheaper than was available previously. The fact that we could offer AT&T at a cheaper price was truly amazing. It wasn’t nearly as large a barrier to get them to sign on to having their phone service changed over, because AT&T was such a recognizable brand name.

We, and our fast-growing team, were able to sign up thousands of customers. Weeks, and then months, passed and the service wasn’t being hooked up with AT&T. This was in spite of our having signed contracts and a recorded message with an AT&T executive confirming the arrangement with our company to resell their service. Eventually, we realized that, although AT&T was willing, they weren’t technically able “re-bill” the customers. We, as the team of resellers were not going to be paid for our marketing efforts. It was such a disappointment.

Just about the time we realized that this dream wasn’t going to materialize, Tom received a call from Charles Givens asking him if he would make the presentations to sell his program in the live events. As mentioned earlier, Chuck had perfected the “infomercial” concept and was having large crowds arrive in the hotel rooms all across the country. He needed someone who knew the product well and could persuasively articulate to the audience from the stage. This was perfect for Tom with his skills as a public speaker.

This began a wonderful period of time for our family and our finances. Although it meant Tom had to be gone significant portions of the week, it was worth it to us because it rewarded his efforts so well. This lasted from 1991 to approximately 1994.

Our family enjoyed a prosperous period of time. When I last talked about our two young adults, they were finishing their high school educations via a fantastic home correspondence course. By now they were through with high school and discussing what they wanted to do with their lives. They were both emphatic they did *not* want to pursue more education through the college or university system. We supported them and told them we would pay for whatever things they wanted to explore.

One little story I’ll slip in here is about Joe during his junior high years. His teacher was showing them all how to write a resume. Joe insisted that he didn’t need to do this exercise at all because he wasn’t ever going to work for somebody else. He was going to be an entrepreneur like his dad. This would prove very true for him even though, upon leaving high school he didn’t know for sure what he really wanted to do as a career.

Joe became very interested in the work of a great mentor, Anthony Robbins. He attended his first weekend workshop, Unleash the Power Within, in 1990. He had originally been “comped” a ticket by someone who attended one of Tom’s lectures with Charles Givens. With a comped ticket for that event, where he experienced walking on hot coals of 1800°, he was hooked and wanted to attend the Robbins Mastery University. This was comprised of several separate events spread out over the coming year. It was a joy to watch him blossom and expand—really explode— into a remarkable, powerful human being.

After attending several events, Joe then joined the program that developed trainers to help facilitate the events by mixing with the participants to answer questions and help them with processes that Tony was sharing from the stage. Joe was *a natural* and quickly became a leader among the training staff.

Our daughter, Tani, was already a wonderful cook. She decided she wanted to further explore culinary school. She attended a vegetarian cooking school in New York City. This required her to get an apartment and live there for almost a year. It was fun to help her find a suitable sub-let apartment and then visit her a couple of times to explore the Big Apple. She loved it and thrived, becoming an excellent vegetarian chef. Her goal at that time was to become a private chef, preparing delicious, healthful vegetarian meals.

One of the most impactful events Tani and I attended together was a 10-day Tony Robbins event in Hawaii and was truly a life-changing experience. Tani went on to enter the trainer’s program along with her brother. They both excelled and became great friends with many other trainers. They are fast friends to this day, calling themselves the “Blast Gang.”

They spent several years working with the Robbins organization. Tani used her vegetarian skills for many multi-day events where she interfaced with the kitchen staff in the hotel where the event was being held to have healthful vegetarian snacks and meals provided for the participants. Joe went on to become a Master Trainer. He was an excellent speaker by this time, and Tony often had him take sections of the program, when his (Tony’s) voice needed a rest or he needed to be elsewhere. Joe went on to meet a wonderful young lady that he would marry and have two magnificent children. Grandchildren are something that must be experienced to understand. I’ll talk more about them later.

But for Tom, unfortunately, as with many things, his time with Chuck Givens wouldn’t last. Chuck had become a television personality, and along with this notoriety came some lawsuits by people for various things (anyone that becomes that visible and successful often becomes a target). He was asked to be on many shows like NBC news, Oprah, and other talk show programs. He dispensed personal financial wisdom, becoming a well-known expert.

What caused him the most damage was when one gentleman bought the program, didn’t follow the guidelines and advice about replacing whole life insurance with term insurance and then investing the difference in the premiums. This guy cancelled his whole life policy before he had the term life policy in effect and then was killed in a car wreck, leaving his wife and family with no insurance proceeds.

The jury didn’t care that this gentleman directly misapplied the financial strategy which said don’t cancel one policy until you have another in place. The Lawyers and the jury only cared that this rich guy should pay this widow and her children. Of course, the lawyer got a healthy share of the award as well. That started a precedent of lawsuits and Chuck finally had to use the shelter of bankruptcy. He died of cancer only a couple of years later.

Needless to say, we had been proud of representing the company that was helping thousands of people all over the country, only to have it unfairly bashed in the press causing the organization to no longer be able operate, leaving Tom without a source of income. Once again, nasty and unfair press coverage hit, causing us to have to start over again.

Just prior to all this, Tom had been approached by two businessmen who had been involved in the company reselling AT&T service. They had worked for a couple of years to fix the challenges that had caused the other company to fall apart, so they approached Tom to be one of the principals and the financier of a new company to offer long distance at a cheaper price through a network of representatives selling to customers.

This company struggled to gain purchase, and, after a while, we bought out those two fellows and brought the company to Colorado, where we had just recently moved from Richmond. Tom continued to work with the Charles Givens Organization, as long as it lasted. We ran our fledgling telecom company, SynCom International Inc., from the basement of our home in Boulder. We hired a small staff and began to build a network of reps and customers.

We eventually grew too large for our basement and moved to an office space in Boulder. We added to our staff, while still keeping it small and efficient. One of the most satisfying things to me was that our company was able to offer employment to several members of my family. Both of my sisters, a brother-in- law, plus assorted cousins, nieces and nephews were at one time or another on our staff. What fun that was!

Much of our staff became like family to us and are still friends to this day. One of these was the son of the man that Tom had worked with in the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God. He definitely became like a son (at the age of three, he had become very bonded with Tom while Tom was a minister’s assistant, and we didn’t have any children of our own yet). We were so proud and happy to have the grown-up version of this sweet little boy later come and work in our fledgling company. His contributions to our company were enormous. We appreciate and thank him to this day. We are also so happy to note that he went on to become very successful in his own endeavors after leaving SynCom.

Our main product was long-distance services provided by larger telecom companies and we were able to resell these services at a lower cost to the consumer. We continued to look for compatible products to add to our line of services. The world was changing rapidly, and technology especially was exploding.

We were dedicated to help our representatives establish a great lifestyle, financially and personally. We believed that earning money also requires developing one’s personality, integrity, and self-awareness. To this end we developed a “Leadership School” for our representatives to attend in Boulder.

Our son, Joe, was working with Tony Robbins extensively during this period. This gave him a tremendous training ground that he used to develop a world-class curriculum to help our field team members. Other members of our staff contributed greatly to making these trainings successful. This school lasted two to three days.

We had a buffet dinner at our home (catered by our daughter, Tani) and served people “clean food” (as it’s called today), a string quartet played in our living room, and our reps could see the lights of Boulder from the beautiful foothills just west of Boulder. Without Joe’s expertise and skills these trainings would not have been nearly as impactful for all who attended.

During this training we covered personal development, understanding ourselves, using the DiSC information, as well as information about our business opportunity with SynCom and how our Reps could be more successful. They were power- packed, exciting, and so much fun. These trainings were definitely a highlight for all of our family, our home office staff and our field participants. To this day we have friends who attended these trainings remark about what a positive impact they had on them, their own personal growth, and their family relationships.

One of the most impactful sessions was something Joe had learned with Tony Robbins. We had people spend time in the session writing a list of what they would like to be, do, or have if money, time, and health were no object. Joe would encourage them during this time of introspection to dig deep and search for those things that were the most inspiring, fun, rewarding and satisfying things they would like to do, be, or have. It was a very life-enriching exercise.

As a company we continued to work hard with determination, but the world was changing. Long distance had turned into a commodity and prices were constantly dropping, reducing profit margins. We tried to seek additional products that we saw emerging, among them cell phones and satellite TV service. These were emerging markets and have gone on to be huge ones, but we were unable to find the strategic partners to fit our marketing model at that time.

Our profits and the incomes of our wonderful, dedicated representatives kept dwindling. Meeting payroll became impossible. We had to lay off staff and move our office back to our basement. We didn’t seem to be making progress. Eventually, we had to close the doors to SynCom International.

Our life has been a study in “starting over,” and we realized that once again that’s the point where we were. The Givens Organization had finally ceased to provide any income at all for Tom and our “baby,” the telecom company, was also a thing of the past. What do we do now?

Our son, Joe, had eventually felt the draw to start his own thing. He loved working with Tony’s team, but wanted to be sovereign. He wanted to be his own master. He started a Public Speaking Bootcamp. Joe has trained many thousands of people since he began this power-packed program.

At one point Joe was offered the contract to train aerospace engineers who needed to get out of their heads and give persuasive presentations about why the companies they worked for were the best ones to build whatever project was up for bid. Joe and his dad provided intensive, one-to-one training to give those brainy engineers the ability to show the “customer” (the government) not just the facts and stats, but the *benefits* that their teams could offer. This perspective gave a whole new dimension to a presentation for an RFP (request for proposal).

They were wildly successful with this and, therefore, the companies they worked with most of the time won the contracts to build something for the military or other arm of the government. This was a fun and rewarding time for Tom, who dearly loved working so closely with his son.

One of the significant contributions that Tom made to this aerospace training was to work with those engineers to understand themselves and others better. He used the Personal Profile (D-i-S-C) to attain this goal. Most of these nerdy types (while they are fabulous at their jobs) don’t usually understand the other personality styles and how to best work with them. Understanding this and utilizing it effectively save them a head and shoulders advantage over their competition.

During all this time, as you can see, Tom was very busy and providing for our family well. While I have always been part of every business that we built, many times Tom traveled while I stayed home. I therefore had the luxury of following my heart to learning more about who I am, spiritually.

I had begun my personal and spiritual growth earlier while living in Richmond. Moving to Boulder, the center of this type of learning. It, for me, was like throwing Brer Rabbit in the Briar Patch. While I never entertained or weighed in on *political issues* that abounded in the Boulder community, I was happy to have so many choices of workshops and programs for learning about myself and continuing my spiritual journey.

I learned that much of the more *straight-forward* part of my family and other Denver residents looked on Boulder as “25 square miles surrounded by reality.” The reputation of being full of fruits and nuts was only superseded by that of California. It suited us just fine. We loved the town, how it felt, and what was offered. This included the climate and all the wonderful vegetarian choices there were. My two children and I were vegetarian, something that was kind of weird to the culture of Richmond in the early 1990s. We finally fit in with the local culture.

To me, Boulder was like heaven. For one thing, with the altitude, low humidity, and clear skies, we often brag that we average “300 days of sun” a year. If that’s not exactly true, it sure feels like it. Virginia, with high humidity, didn’t experience the robin’s egg blue skies that are so common in Colorado. With low humidity, it was (and still is) like paradise to us, although we use a lot more skin moisturizer than before. Having been born in Colorado, I was also so happy to come home. I had a large extended family I barely knew, and it was a delight to get reacquainted!

Boulder has so many unique and wonderful places to poke around: McGuckin Hardware, the Dushanbe Teahouse, Pearl Street Mall, Chautauqua, the campus of the University of Colorado, the Flatirons, Celestial Seasonings Tea company, loads of places to eat (vegetarian, Mexican, Indian, Thai, etc.), places to hike, and to breathe the great mountain air!

Without sounding like the Chamber of Commerce advertising, this was the perfect atmosphere for our family to thrive and for me to continue my path of spiritual unfolding.

I’d like to interject here that both our children have grown to be wonderful, powerful and loving people. Joe has continued to help people focus their talents, interests and abilities into profitable speaking, consulting and writing ventures. He and his second wife have helped many thousands over the years and will only become more successful and in demand as the years go by. His two children have become young adults forging their own paths and interests. They are a delight to watch.

Our daughter, Tani, has become a homemaker and mother of three wonderful children. They are progressing through their years at school and are brilliant, shining examples of joy and fun. Her husband is a successful certified financial planner and has helped many find the best investments and financial strategies for their lives and retirement. Together they are a fabulous team, whether in the kitchen serving yummy meals and entertainment or parenting their beautiful children. It is a joy to watch the entire family.

In continuing my story, my own spiritual awakening unfolds more in the next chapter. . .

# CHAPTER EIGHT: Learning to Live in Joy

While I was in Virginia I had already started much of my spiritual journey, which included working with and learning from many teachers and people on a variety of subjects in the genre of spiritual growth. I had tarot, astrology, and other types of readings. I read books on every subject I could get my hands on. Through all this, I used my own inner sense to see if the information resonated within me as truth, not feeling the need to follow or accept any parts that didn’t feel right. While traditional Christians might feel these things are of the devil, I found they were gently nourishing and helpful to my soul. Anything less than that caused me to just “turn the other cheek” and look elsewhere.

While exploring how we create our daily lives, I learned this powerful truth:

*This is a vibrational Universe that we live in. We are vibrational beings. We are actually, first and foremost, non-physical beings focused into this physical reality. We are focused here to create, to expand the Universe. This is not religion, or metaphysical nonsense. The entire Universe is governed and operates by immutable and powerful laws. The most important and impactful to our daily lives is the* ***Law of Attraction****.*

I had earlier mentioned that Tom and I had become certified to teach and work with folks using the Personal Profile System (DiSC) back in the later 1970s. As I dug deeper into understanding my spiritual self, I realized how valuable our personalities are to us in this physical playground. Our personalities are sort of the way we’ve trained ourselves to appear in and to the world. Our personalities drive our desires, goals, dreams, and perspectives.

Because we are Eternal Spiritual Beings who chose to play and expand ourselves by focusing our consciousness into this physical world, we also chose a “way of being” from the start. This choice was general and not iron clad. It was an “operating system,” so to speak, running in the background to give us reference and structure for being physical.

From our vibrational, non-physical perspective we chose our parents by agreement with them at a super-conscious level. We basically knew what was going on in their lives and what the probabilities for the future would be by living with them. We knew that we would be able to explore, learn, and develop into the person we wanted to be in the environment those parents would provide.

Therefore, in a sense, the further development of our personalities would be affected and shaped by our environment while growing up. We also knew we would have total and free choice to do, be, and have anything we wanted. From that perspective we knew the foundation of our early years, whatever it may be, would be *perfect*.

When young, we remembered the joys, intentions and possibilities brought with us from non-physical. Again, we knew we could have anything or do anything. We felt we were the center of the Universe and that all was working out for us for the best. We felt guided, protected, loved, and most of all–joyful!

The personality that we had was there to further all these desires and dreams. It always felt comfortable and positive to us. Life was just plain satisfying. We knew we would learn to walk, no question about it. We *knew* we’d someday be rich and famous, no question about it. We *knew* we’d meet our Prince Charming or Beautiful Princess one day, no question about it. We *knew* we could change the world, no question about it! That’s how we felt growing up.

As we continued to grow, interact with others, and expand, we learned what things we really thought were cool, what we wanted more of – and, on the other hand, the things that we didn’t like so much, what we wanted to avoid or rid ourselves of.

We developed through this life experience beliefs, desires and values – the added dimensions of our personalities.

And then life continues to happen. Oh, those life experiences . . .

Almost from the start as children, we were told by others “how things were.” Some of what we heard and saw coincided with our personality and world view, and some of it didn’t. Little by little—from well-meaning parents, teachers, coaches, professors, clergy persons, friends, and enemies—we were asked to fit into shapes and molds that weren’t always comfortable. Our personalities reacted, adapted, and morphed to make accommodations. We developed coping, accepting, denying, and resisting methods as well.

Over time, as you and I were exposed to more streams of thought, our own thoughts began to shift and change. We wanted to “fit in” and to be accepted by our peers. Thoughts we were told continually and then pondered more and more, became beliefs or “habits of thought.” Beliefs are just thoughts we continue to think. They are no more RIGHT or WRONG than that. Even though we come to feel like beliefs are *sacred* and set in stone, they can be challenged and altered! Often because some beliefs are generational, we think it would be flat our wrong to alter or reject them. This is an understanding that needs to be challenged itself.

## Beliefs and Thoughts Form Results

Beliefs are just thoughts that we think over and over, or were told over and over, until accepted as our own.

Some time in our life, though, we might have been lucky enough to learn how the Universe works and how our powerful thoughts actually manifest into physical form *and being*. Not really having been exposed to the quantum understanding and the physics behind the Law of Attraction, this began to stretch my accumulated beliefs, and it may yours as well.

What we think about and how we FEEL about it are what will become our life experience. The sum-total of our thoughts, beliefs and feelings have a magnetic attraction that causes like to be drawn to like. The powerful Law of Attraction says, “that which is like unto itself is drawn.”

Much is being taught and espoused regarding the Law of Attraction. It isn’t a gimmick or party game to try to make things happen. But what happens is the result of the way we are feeling, our personality traits, our general mood and over- riding conversation daily. These result in what will come to us in the future.

So much of our personalities are expressed in feelings, moods, and conversations– usually about the “small stuff” in our lives. We set up a pattern, our Set Point, that becomes a powerful magnet to draw more of the same to us. As I began to think about the personality styles – DISC – I got a feel for the basic tendencies of how they might be at any time. Each style has certain tendencies that produce more positive reactions *in* self and others. They also have tendencies to produce more positive results *for* self and others.

I began to ponder how we can learn to bring out the most positive tendencies in our own personalities. Can we learn to create the results we want using our personalities and God-given abilities to tap into a higher consciousness that will help guide and direct us to all that we want to accomplish?

This subject intrigues me to this day. As I continue on my spiritual path, I realize more and more how important it is to “KNOW THYSELF,” accept and love who I am and then continue to do the inner work that raises my vibration daily to that state of joy, love, and appreciation! I much later learned that it doesn’t need to be quite as much “work” as I was making it!

Many wonderful friends were met via the book store in Richmond where I worked following prison, and I appreciate so much all that each of them shared with me.

Through one such friend, I met a couple, Sharon & Patrick O’Hara and their group The Growing Place. Those who participated and still do participate with The Growing Place were/are friendly, loving and equally dedicated to their own spiritual paths. We had loads of fun over the years with workshops and retreats to various spots on the planet. It was a fertile ground for growing. The name of their organization was fitting.

The retreats were held in various places around the U.S. and abroad where the O’Haras felt we could each learn a piece needed for our personal soul growth, and also where we, as a group, could lend our energy for the upliftment of the area where we were visiting. It was exciting and very satisfying to feel energy move so profoundly!

In one of the many workshops I attended with The Growing Place, one sticks out in my mind as maybe the second most impactful and paranormal-like experience for me. We were being led through a guided meditation and were experiencing the moment before we would leave our bodies in this life. (Yes, I had come to believe that most likely we all have lived many lives before and will continue to come back to enjoy the fun and expansion of this time/space reality.) This particular meditation, for me, was very deep. What I experienced felt as real as anything I’ve ever felt before.

The scene I saw or felt was me lying on a bed or table in a brightly lit, comfortable room. I was being attended to by my dear husband, Tom, only he was an extremely bright, energy being. The love and consideration that I felt coming from him *was immense*. He was there to help me take my next steps back into a non-physical form, leaving behind the vehicle of my body that had served me so well.

When I came out of that meditation, the first thought was, “well, for goodness sake, he made it after all!” I’ll have to say that at that time period Tom, and I didn’t necessarily agree on the conclusions I was drawing. He was always allowing of my crazy, weird ideas and practices, but mostly not in agreement with them. This event was a life-changer for me. I realized we are all on our own path and everything is going to be okay.

Not long after we moved to Colorado, our family and some of our staff at the office took a powerful weekend seminar called The Landmark Forum. It was very helpful in finding our patterns and beliefs and shifting them to help us move more helpfully along in whatever growth we were seeking. This organization was spawned by the course “EST” taught by Werner Erhard. Former employees of Erhard formed Landmark and bought his intellectual property to design “The Forum.” We learned a lot and it was a great bridge for communicating better with friends, employees, and family, but we were not drawn to continue in the rest of the courses that Landmark offered (which were substantial). It was just another learning experience along the path of evolving.

In about 1995 or so, at one of the workshops with The Growing Place, we were instructed to visualize in meditation how we would create the world to BE in 2012. After the meditation ended, I made some notes of what I visualized. Turns out some significant energy shifts took place on the planet and in the souls of its inhabitants about 2012. Looking through some old notebooks researching for this book, I found these old notes:

***How I Visualize/Create the World for 2012***

* *No more debt or high interest*
* *No income tax or IRS*
* *Money (dollars) flow as easily as breathing in and out*
* *Close communities and families living in harmony and ease*
* *Home schooling or alternative options, especially for small children*
* *Kids learning from fun activities, hobbies, experiences*
* *College free or small tuition – balanced without divisive politics involved*
* *Free Enterprise and inner-directed opportunities – greed curtailed*
* *Health care/wellness care with natural and herbal remedies*
* *All people living in joy, love, harmony, and appreciation for each other and this beautiful Universe*

Although the world didn’t quite reach that state physically in 2012. It reminded me of what we were taught in the Worldwide Church of God about the promised Millennium, where we would live for 1,000 years in peace and harmony. I described it earlier in chapter One. In recent years I have learned such a plan has been in the works for some time and we may yet see the enactment of portions of this “vision” from my meditation. Could those visions and meditations have somehow affected our future? Maybe, maybe not. More about this later.

The year 2012 held a major shift in the energy of this Universe. I’m not sure I totally understand what all happened in that shift, but I *know* I was part of it! What I find interesting now, in 2021, is how much of that vision is reappearing in the concept of NESARA. You can learn more about that in Chapter 9 and in *America’s First Freedom*.

During this time, we continued to have our issues with the Internal Revenue Service. They had us on their radar and I was just beginning to understand how much I was creating that situation by my own thoughts and beliefs, and from my fear and scarcity mentality.

One small shift in my thinking and conversations that really made a difference was when I decided to change how I *felt* about that organization. Until this time whenever we received a piece of mail with the IRS return address, I would get a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach, and it was *fear*!

But the idea came to me that I could make the initials I-R-S stand for something wonderful and empowering. It took some mental gymnastics, but I decided that, instead of Internal Revenue Service, it could mean “Infinite Resource Supply.” For years since whenever I hear or see those initials, I transpose them in my mind to be something coming from my own personal Infinite Resource Supply. If you play with it, you can come up with more very powerful, fun, and positively meaningful things that acronym stands for.

The biggest other piece, personally, that I learned from The Growing Place was how to work with energy, how to meditate, how to begin to see everything from a higher perspective and, most importantly, how *divine* I am! This sunk in very profoundly one day when Patrick looked in my eyes (and everyone else there) and said “You are It!” It was clear to me that we all are a Divine Spark and are part of “IT”. My time spent in devotion and instruction with the Growing Place was and continues to be priceless.

Probably the most significant teachers I found since then were with Jerry and Esther Hicks and the teachings of Abraham. Through a constant communication with them (even having them come to our home for meals many times!) with the collective non-physical intelligence that Esther tunes in to, I have come to deeply understand how life really works. I have seen that real spiritual awakening goes far beyond the personality that we have used to get around in this physical experience.

I have learned that my own mood, my feelings, my vibrational stance, and my inner knowing can allow me to create a wonderful life of joy, success, and satisfaction in all things. I alone have that ability and responsibility. I can create high vibration outcomes like enthusiasm, eagerness, confidence, passion, empowerment, freedom, love, and appreciation! It’s purely a choice. I’ve learned to get a sense of how I am vibrating in any given moment, and then consciously and purposely move myself up the “Emotional Scale” to a better, more productive and joyful place. That’s when MAGIC happens! (see the Emotional Guidance Scale at the end of this chapter).

One of the main points I’ve learned from these teachings is that we all have come into these bodies with a triad of intentions: 1) Freedom, 2) Growth, and 3) Joy. We are so free we can choose bondage. Growth is the inevitable result of living our lives of expansion. Joy is the real goal. Once we care about how we feel, we will strive to live in joy as much of the time as possible. We become aware that how we feel is under our individual control. We can choose to be happy every day! We are never victims. We create our realities–even the things we think we don’t want.

My search for these truths is commonly called “seeking enlightenment.” Lo and behold, enlightenment is just feeling good, happy, joyful, and full of appreciation. It is a state that can be chosen consciously by learning a couple of simple things: 1) I must care about how I feel and not accept *feeling bad* and, 2) I can *purposefully* choose to feel better using the Emotional Guidance Scale as a tool to move myself upward. Not as complicated as I was making it all those years of searching. All I need to do is ask myself at any point when I am in a quandary or trying to make sense out of something, “Right now where am I emotionally? Am I feeling emotions from the top of the scale or from the bottom?” What an extremely useful tool this is! (see chart at end of chapter).

It is powerful and wonderful to realize the grandest of all conspiracies is the conspiracy of Well-Being that we have going on at our Source. I’ve touched on several conspiracy theories in this book and our companion book, *America’s First Freedom*, but *this* conspiracy of Well-Being trumps them all!

I’ve come to the point to comprehend *to my bones* that I am a spiritual, non- physical, eternal consciousness that chose to inhabit a flesh and blood body for a period of time in order to sort through all the “stuff”—contrast and variety—in order to choose to create more of what the Divine Being delights in becoming. There is no death as we have always been taught. It is merely a change of perspective, like going from one room into another!

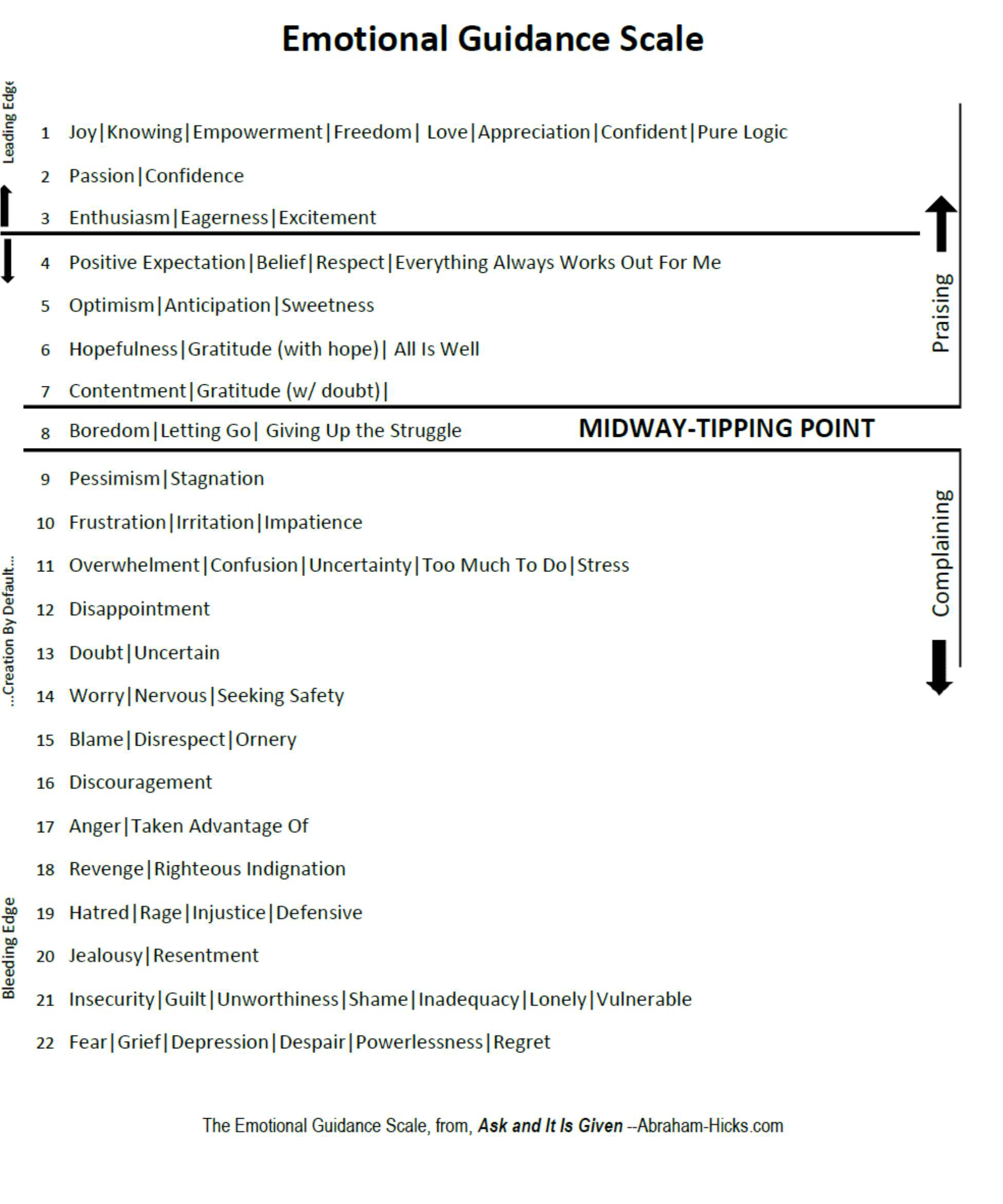
I’ve distilled years of searching, learning, testing, and sorting through concepts and beliefs here in to just a few pages. It will become too boring to you, my dear readers, if I go on much longer with what I’ve learned. Maybe the process won’t take others so long. After all, we are each on our own journey through this life to find meaning and fulfillment, and perhaps it gets easier as others have paved the way before us.

I understand now how the path I’ve meandered along (some of it detailed here for you to see and vicariously share) has all been just perfect for learning and experiencing that variety that I came into this body seeking. Looking back, I can see WHY certain experiences were afforded me, and why WHAT I learned was so important for my soul growth! Most of all, I am thrilled to have learned that I get to choose—I am a sovereign being and everything is (and always has been) *my choice!*

I more fully understand how the intention of coming into the physical realm (we are all eternal spirit beings) is to explore and choose, decide and expand. The frequency of love is the tuning fork that we want to tune to. That is our essence.

Words are hard to find to fully explain how significant each person, each teacher, each friend, each “enemy” and each adventure has been to me. Words of thanks would never be enough. I deeply appreciate all the participants who, either knowingly or unknowingly, contributed to this growth—those co-creators who chose to be cooperative components to help guide and encourage me to a fuller creative expression of all that I am.

From ***Ask & It Is Given*** by Jerry & Esther Hicks, pp. 114-115 (by permission Abraham-Hicks.com)



# CHAPTER NINE: Back From the Future

Looking back on my life while writing this Memoir, I’ll now end by how my life unfolded in terms of my personal and spiritual growth.

I feel there are some amazing events that have come together during my life’s journey to form quite an incredible picture. There are many significant events and lessons that prepared the path for me to move forward. By attempting to write about them, I have discovered how these events have dovetailed together, by Divine guidance I believe, to lead me along a path of heightened awareness and perhaps even enlightenment or awakening. Each of these are like puzzle pieces that came to me at the time I needed them for understanding and to take the next step.

No event was ever wasted or ever *bad*. All make up what I am today. What I am today is pretty awesome.

## My early years

* **Life is a grand, fun adventure.** I can do, be, or have anything. I can ride horses with the wind flying through my hair, teach eternal wisdom to youngsters, marry a rich man, live in the mountains raising horses and dogs, and so much more. Pure joy!
* **Laughter is the best, especially at the dinner table.** Some of my fondest memories are sitting around, mostly after we had eaten, and laughing until our sides ached and we fell out of our chairs. Pure joy!
* **It is a really fun thing to be a teacher.** I knew I had great wisdom that needed to be shared with others younger than me. I could teach anything.
* **Performing before an audience is thrilling.** Watching people laugh was a joy that is hard to express. Early days of television expanded my imagination about what can be done to entertain people. These were thoughts and dreams, but really not ever part of my future. Apart from music class and a few talent show performances in high school, I never showed much talent for singing or acting. I loved every minute of singing in the high school choir (music class we all were required to take), even though my mother once said to me, “can’t you hear that you aren’t in tune?” I knew then a rock and roll career was out for me!
* **Life isn’t always what I or any of us consider to be *fair*.** As I began to have more down-to-earth experiences, I began to see how the good guys don’t necessarily win. Much of my life I was trying to figure out why. I wish someone had explained the Law of Attraction to me at that young age. Life is actually very fair. You get what you are thinking or *vibrating*, whether you want it or not!
* **Don’t disregard or throw out the teachings from your youth.** Many times I have found that rather than turning my back on certain teachings and beliefs, realize that sometimes a deeper level of understanding about them can be found. This deeper level, whether as an allegory, personal symbol, or parable, often carries deep soul lessons and understanding.

## The Church

* **My first awareness of “Ye are Gods”** (Psalms 82:6; John 10:34) I remember sitting in church and seeing those words in my Bible and being just plain dumbfounded. Could this actually mean what it says? I knew Jesus said, “greater things than I do, you will do,” but I never quite understood that either. I just remember feeling thrilled to my bones at that scripture.
* **An organization of any kind (especially churches) tends to rely on using FEAR to grow and control its members.** Unfortunately, through the teachings of the church we attended, I began to feel really bad about myself, that I was worthless. I learned to fear some events that were prophesied to happen in my lifetime, and they were very scary.
* **Any organization can become a cult.** In hindsight I realized that the church we attended (and even lots of other organizations) was cultish and tried to control people. I also have come to know that only the members can make an organization a cult. Each of us is responsible to *think for ourselves* and not let a powerful personality control us and our behavior, whether a boss, a teacher, a minister, or an elected official.
* **We all need freedom of thought, belief, and action.** The need within me to find freedom began to burn brightly. I came to feel that unless I was free, I was going to be miserable. This theme has continued in my life to this day.
* **The Bible, through the Old Testament Holy Days** and other scriptures, showed a coming Millennium of Peace and Prosperity. While we don’t feel like we need to *keep* (observe) these Holy Days, we do need to keep the meaning in mind always.
* **Exposure to prophecies that didn’t seem pertinent.** The church taught a lot about the prophets and what they taught. Fear was behind most of it. Dates were given, but then didn’t come to pass. I began to wonder if any of the prophecies applied to today. It shook my faith considerably. I’ve only recently become aware of how timely many of prophecies are to *today*.
* **Be better, not bitter.** Once we separated from the church and went on with our lives, we realized that we weren’t going to be happy or become successful if we carried any negative emotions in our memories. We were determined to cease speaking about our church experiences from a negative point of view.
* **Religions don’t have all the answers.** Be Christ centered. I learned that you can be very spiritual and live a good, loving life without being on the rolls of any church organization. I began to realize that many churches exist only to perpetuate the organization.
* **Never lose your deep, personal relationship with a Higher Power, Source or Being.** As humans we are sparks of Divinity and knowledge of this is the most important gift we’ve ever received.

## The Business World (Including MLMs)

* **We all have tremendous potential.** Within each of us are powerful mental and emotional creative abilities. Through desire and focus while maintaining positive expectation and feelings of love and joy, we can create, build or manifest anything. . . *anything!*.
* **Develop a positive mental attitude.** The most important key to living a happy, satisfying and successful life is found by developing and maintaining a cheery outlook and joyful expectation of all good things coming to us.
* **If it is to be, it is up to me.** We must never wait around for a savior or someone to do things for us, especially the government. We are each sovereign beings and are able to accomplish whatever is really important to us. Get after it.
* **Free Enterprise and the free market are most healthy for our economy.** The constant argument about the difference between capitalism and socialism rages on. Truth be told both are right, and both have faulty conclusions. We need to realize that a free market unfettered by government control will build the strongest society. A strong, prosperous society will breed people who care about others and will fill needs locally when shown. History is full of the extremes of both capitalism and socialism. Capitalism can foster greed and deeds done for money, not love. Socialism fosters inactivity and dependence by the masses, while a few become wealthy and powerful. Neither system has total solutions. The best is when people filled with love and pure hearts take care of each other. This type of system may be given a real chance in the coming days.
* **The news media can be (and has been) biased and one-sided in its reporting.** While the media has a valuable place in a free society to report all sides of various issues so citizens can weigh those issues and come to their own choices and decisions, of recent history they have been corrupted and determined to cover up most real truth and report only a narrative that the powers in control have required they report. It would be wonderful indeed to have reporters, commentators, and influencers report as fairly and justly as they can. We all have our opinions, but it should be stated as opinion and not fact. Our media must not be a propaganda arm of a crooked government.
* **Always be willing to start over. Never give up!** It is impossible to ever have a guarantee of a specific outcome. Life is full of changes, challenges, twists and turns. In realizing that each of us is loved and cared for by a benevolent, loving God/Source, we can trust that everything is always working out for us. Each venture or experience can be appreciated for the data provided and lessons learned. Each *failure* can be viewed as a stepping- stone to more and better. The only time there is actual failure is when one gives up entirely.
* **All business is a metaphor for life in general.** How you feel and deal with others is reflected from your heart out into the world and any business you undertake. The Golden Rule rules supreme!
* Never judge or criticize others for the decisions they’ve made about life, business and career choices. We all are on our own path.

## Liberty Ministries (LMI)

* **A deeper understanding and appreciation for US history and our Founding Fathers.** Our country was Divinely inspired, and the Founding Fathers were led by a Higher Power to establish the United States as a grand experiment where sovereign people come together and form a *more perfect union*. By really learning about what those people believed and went through, we can understand more fully what we now face and how vitally important it is to be aware and involved with those we choose to govern us.
* **There has been a shadow government at work in the background.** There have been some pretty shadowy “bad guys” working behind the scenes for many, many years. It has been kept from us. If any are so brave as to try to sound the alarm, they are denigrated and silenced. We must keep our eyes and ears open, and teach the following generation how important it is to remain extremely watchful.
* **We must maintain a positive mental attitude at all times.** Even when being attacked and maligned, it is important to 1) check your beliefs and 2) remain strong within yourself. Learning to think and feel as good as you can every day helps maintain the mood of positivity that will attract the best results—enlightenment.
* **The news media is not just biased, but an arm of the shadow government.** All forms of media, even “mindless entertainment” can be used to program the minds of the people, especially children. Reminding ourselves about the agenda behind the news, entertainment, Hollywood, sports, and all the social media apps, we can watch while protecting ourselves from the mind control that is sought by that shadowy bunch.
* **Churches have been part of this deception as well.** Unfortunately, churches have succumbed to this same propaganda and mind control. Organized religions need to be watched with extra diligence. A person or group who contends they have the keys to your eternal life must be considered suspect at all times. The basis of Liberty Ministries was and is again for people to take control of their own salvation.
* **We all need to have a clear connection to our own dogmas (religious and spiritual commitment, beyond local church organizations).** It is a very important exercise (one we had our members do back in LMI-1980) to figure out what we really believe, what we deem vital to our own spiritual growth and life and how we choose to live our lives.
* **Standing firm in your convictions is vital.** No matter what others, even powerful governments say or do to you, remember that you are sovereign and divine. You and your opinions and beliefs matter!

## Incarceration

* **There has to be a rude awakening before there can be a great awakening.** This is especially true of all of us that have been lulled to sleep by the mind control via our media. Smart phones have become a way of life for us. Most people hardly take time to think and ponder—to wait to hear our own inner voice give us guidance. Because we just have had a hamster wheel existence, the rat race, we have needed to be snapped out of running mindlessly in circles and to be awakened. We need someone to throw a bucket of cold water on our sleeping corpses. This was true of my life prior to spending time incarcerated. Talk about a rude awakening! Now is the time for all of us to have a Great Awakening. To come to awareness of who we are and how wonderful our lives can truly be.
* **You get back what you give or send out.** When I was in close proximity to many women who were also incarcerated for various infractions, some of which were quite violent, I learned everyone will basically treat you the way you treat them. Your “vibe” will proceed you and they will pick up on negative thoughts, judgments, and criticism. To walk freely and openly among others with little care about their past and just accepting them as they are now, was an astonishing experience. I only received back what I projected outward.
* **There are good people everywhere.** Some of the most genuine, loving and special women were found in that federal penitentiary. There was much laughter and joy as these women adjusted to their environment and tried to make the best of it. I learned that I could not know anyone’s real story or what happened and that it really wasn’t any of my business.
* **Learn to suspend judgment.** You never know someone else’s whole story. Come to realize we are each on our own path and it’s best to suspend judging and just work on ourselves. Don’t judge others. You don’t know what they are going through.
* **Even seemingly bad things always work for the good.** Even something as life-changing as going to prison had so many good benefits. It took some time, using that much-renowned hindsight, to realize just how valuable my time during incarceration really was. This is true with many other seemingly difficult events in my life.

## You can be *locked up*, physically or mentally, but never truly broken.

Your freedom is between your ears and in your heart. No matter whether

you are confined in a cell or *locked down* for the good of everyone’s health, you must never give in or give up!

## My Spiritual Path

* **I am a spiritual being having a physical experience.** I am a spark of divinity having a physical experience as Linda Susan Untiedt Williams. Every experience I have as Linda expands the entire Universe.
* **I am eternal and have lived many physical experiences.** As I once came to know (in a thought download from my Inner Being), “if I believe that there is life *after* this life, after death of this life, then why is it so hard to believe that there was life *before* this one?”
* **There is nothing really serious going on here.** If we have the higher view of us in our world, it is somewhat like children in a playground. We are playing games, and we feel like it is a very serious situation. But a wise parent or grandparent that is watching from a distance realizes that our little skirmishes are not really serious. Our lives are for joyful expansion.
* **We are each on our own path and it’s perfect right where we are.** Learning to trust that all is well and where we stand in any moment is just perfect. Each person has their own journey. It is important to accept that all is working out for me and that each of us can be guaranteed of this as well. Because we are all being led and watched over, we need never fear or worry about our future or the future of our loved ones.
* **Because I am a spark of the Divine, I have an Inner Knower, Inner Being, or Divine Conscience that is still non-physical and with me every minute.** Understanding that a greater part of me is still non-physical and knows every thought and desire I have. By going still and listening within, I can have guidance and comfort from that part of me that is always joyful and loving.
* **I can tell how much I am in resonance with my Inner Being by how I feel. The happier, the more connected I am.** I can use the Emotional Guidance Scale to move myself upward in vibration at any time by understanding my emotions and what they mean.
* **I feel the best when I am connected to my Inner Being and allow myself to feel as It does.** I feel best when I feel joy, empowerment, freedom, love, appreciation, confidence and knowledge (Knowing).
* **A world was envisioned that will be one of peace, good health, prosperity, and love in all people, organizations and communities.** Three times in the span of my life have I been told and shown that a beautiful world is in my future. The church of my youth talked of the coming Millennium. In my spiritual journey I was shown I could create in my imagination the world of peace and prosperity. In my later years as I begin to record my Memoirs, I find through research that a world based on NESARA (see *America’s First Freedom* for more information about the National Economic Stability and Restoration Act) may actually be brought forth to us in the near future!
* **Always follow that still, small inner voice and the guidance it offers.** A daily practice of sitting quietly, breathing, and seeking to connect with your Divine Inner Presence will make the days and weeks go more smoothly.
* **Because we are spiritual beings who chose this physical experience, we are also able to choose when we leave this physical experience.** While we may not on our conscious 3-D level comprehend that we have chosen to be here, we likewise don’t understand at this level that we get to choose when and how we leave. It might just be that we are participating in a large scripted “movie” and when our part is played, we can chose to leave the stage. All deaths are, in a way, *a suicide*. That choice is just at a consciousness level we can’t always grasp.

## Re-Awakening 2020

* **God uses various events to get our attention and bring us back to knowing Who we really are.** As any of us look back over our lives we can usually see the strong hand of divine guidance in the events we’ve lived through. If you are not able to see this for yourself, be sure you find time for quiet, inward introspection. In this quiet time and in your dreams you will find where this guidance has been.
* **The news media is not just biased, but an arm of the shadow government.** Throughout my life I personally experienced many examples of the media reported events in my world and I saw personally how the truth was twisted and misrepresented. In 2020 and 2021 I became more aware than ever of how the media has been complicit in mind control and out-right propaganda. The public is not getting truth through our media.
* **Organized churches have been part of the grand scheme to keep us all slaves.** Nearly all the main organized religions and mega churches have been corrupted by the Deep State and promise of wealth. It is very important to research and learn about the background of religious leaders and ministers. There are, of course, sincere, dedicated ministers, priests, rabbis, etc. It is more important than ever to really be careful about who you follow. This is a time to use your own intuition and connection to Divine Love, instead of blindly believing, gullibly following and financially supporting whoever comes along saying sweet words.
* **Many biblical prophecies are being fulfilled in this timeframe.** Many of the prophecies that I learned in my earlier church experience and what others have learned (and are learning) from the sermons they hear about “end time” events as prophesied in Daniel and Revelation are happening now. These have been greatly misunderstood by many, but are more important and relevant today.
* **NESARA as law will bring a whole new paradigm for our lives (an ongoing theme on my path).** Time will tell, but I believe that NESARA/GESARA is imminently going to be revealed and implemented. I know it is hard to believe, so just take it in and say to yourself, “Wouldn’t that be nice?!”
* **Because I am awake to events happening, I want others to benefit from this awareness as well.** Part of my motivation in writing this book and finishing the book we started in 1980, is to help my immediate and extended family learn what might be in store and to not be fearful when events that- have-never-happened-before actually start happening. I am here to help whenever and wherever I can.
* **I hereby declare my sovereignty and that I am a proud Christiam (Christ I Am).**
* **I know to do so much more than I remember to do each day.** Stand up and take *personal responsibility* for:
  + My own body and its health (diet, exercise, and such)
  + My own healthcare (relationship with doctors, care-givers)
  + My own Sovereignty (Know that I am a free being, not a slave)
  + My own Spiritual beliefs (As a Divine Spark I expand & seek joy)
  + My own Resources (All is Well; Abundance abounds; I am deserving)
  + My own Thoughts, Emotions and Joy (the Emotional Guidance Scale is my daily companion)
  + My participation in community by being involved and educated about who I vote for and what they do once they are in office

NOTE: I urge you to do your own research, discover and follow your own path. While it is a bit painstaking, it is worth it. We all need to become involved in our own Divine lives. We need to make our own decisions. On the heels of writing about LMI, I found this story about where we are today in the United States and the world riveting. If nothing else, I hope that I have stretched your mind and given you perspectives you’ve not had before. I appreciate you taking time to read this.

Remember: The Mind like a parachute works best when open! Question everything, no matter where it comes from or where it leads.

**THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

# CHAPTER TEN: The Best Is Yet To Come

I just celebrated my birthday and am amazed at the life I’ve lived! In looking back, I can’t help but feel there has been a guiding hand—that I have been led—in all the twists and turns. Each venture has been an adventure.

But in researching to finish these books, especially the companion book, I found many amazing facts and theories about what has very likely been going on during this crazy time.

In order to help you, our readers of this memoir if you haven’t yet, we recommend you download and read our other book about Liberty Ministries Int’l called, *America’s First Freedom*. It will fill in a huge part of the story of not only our experience, but what might be going on behind the scenes. Part II of this book has just been finished

The story that is told in our other books will explain how a marvelous law has already been passed by our government and signed by President William Clinton in 2000 signed into law: the National Economic Security and Reformation Act (NESARA). It is quite an intriguing story as to why you may have never heard of it, or that it wasn’t actually put into force. It’s a long and fascinating story.

Here is an overview of what it might be like:

In the NESARA society our Creator intends us to be excellent in all areas of our lives. We’ll have wonderful abilities untapped like treasure for the betterment of humanity with witty inventions of new technologies to enhance and improve our lives.

*Our transition from the chaotic systems we’ve all lived with to an environment that will feel like miracles before our very eyes. We will participate in fabulous benefits of the new wonders and resources of our world. New technologies will enhance every aspect of living and ridding society of hunger, poverty, ignorance, injustice, prejudice and lack of understanding through educational methods that will enable everyone with an in-depth understanding of traditional and non-traditional knowledge absolutely free. It will become a right of every human to be empowered with the highest levels of education in every discipline desired.*

*The results will be simple: the Human Resource will be viable for the future of humanity. There will no longer be sickness or disease, hunger or poverty, war or the causes of war among humanity, or natural disasters without protection from the elements thereof using new engineering and advanced materials sufficient to withstand typical natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, or the impact of a meteor.*

*The benefits will also include technology for the cure of present day medical illness without common pharmaceuticals, advanced technology to replace missing limbs, advanced technology to correct physical issues related to mental illness, advanced technology to reverse aging, advanced technology to remove negative elements within illegal vaccines designed for depopulation.*

*Imagine the creation of new superfoods that will enhance the human body in so many areas and supply food without the chemicals that have tainted our food supply. Imagine 86 new food groups and new wonderful gourmet dishes made from new food sources.*

*Imagine the creation and implementation of new transportation technology that does not pollute the environment or use of fossil fuels. Imagine flying your RV to remote camping sites using all the comforts of home without disrupting the environment. Boating on Oceans and Lakes but not making wakes but flying to locations and settling on the waters again with all the comforts of home without disrupting or polluting the water but enjoying the habitats in or out of the water.*

*Also imagine the creation of new security forces to protect humanity from harm and security from the unknown. Imagine respecting all cultures and the people of host nations with their individual liberties and well-being; not the UN or any other world government concept but the same benefit to each host nation for the benefits of their people on Earth and in other planets with new transportation from Earth to other dimensions and plants eco- friendly to our own* (Taken from Man of God Document 9 and can be found at https://[www.libertyministries2021.com/nesaraquantum-financial-](http://www.libertyministries2021.com/nesaraquantum-financial-) system.html.)

What a glorious world that would be and, hopefully, will be! It is a fantastic dream, but one that is worth dreaming.

The story that I found unveiled through my intensive research is truly fantastic. Whether it will prove to be true or not, I do not know. It is such a positive end to the story. I am filled with hope, looking forward to seeing how all this plays out.

If any part of this could become our reality, we would feel that we have given our children and grandchildren a world *better than the way we found it*. That has been my goal now for many years. It’s definitely how I would like my Memoirs to end.

I believe and I repeat now – again – with all certainty:

**THE BEST *IS* YET TO COME!**