

15 February 1986 Gartmore Scotland

God's richest blessings to you according to the wonderful promises of His Word in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ the lord.

I set pen to paper to tell the last days of the life of Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille. After having spent so many days together with him over the course of the years that I was his aide, companion and confidant it was greatly significant to me that I was allowed to spend the last twenty-two days of his life with him.

Dr. Wierwille had a knack of filling days to the very brim with life, and he did not deviate from the norm in his last days before he fell asleep. I have recorded here the content of those days, though not in their entirety. Dr. Wierwille and I spent between thirty-six and forty hours discussing topics as varied as God's Word, affairs of the Ministry, agriculture, local topography, history, public relations, books of common interest to us both and personal matters. He counseled with believers and with Way Corps, worked with Juanita Carey on her research on the life of E. W. Bullinger and involved himself with other projects and interests not recorded here.

What I have attempted to record are the basic activities of his last days and pertinent portions of the many hours of conversations that we had during that space of time. I have included relevant background to add clarity and continuity. I have not left out parts to intentionally slight anyone or diminish the importance of the time that they were blessed to spend with Dr. Wierwille during his last days. Nothing could be farther from my heart or mind.

I am not a writer, but I trust that you will find the text spiritually invigorating. I present it for your consideration. It is my firm believing that God will give understanding to the far from adequate job that I am capable of doing to communicate the contents of the last days of Dr. Wierwille's life which I have called The Passing of a Patriarch.

Definition of PATRIARCH from Oxford English Dictionary (Volume VII). 4: One who is regarded as the father or founder of an order, institution or (by extension) of a science, school of thought, Order the like.

Definition of PATRIARCH from Webster Dictionary: 1 b: a man who is father or founder

c: (1): the oldest or representative of a group (2): a venerable old man

d: a man who is head of a patriarchy

The Passing of a Patriarch Memories flood my mind as I think of the events that led up to and surrounded the final time that I spent with Dr. Wierwille. In December of 1984 we at long last bought a location for The Way Corps to begin in Europe. This had been the original intent when we came to Europe in 1983. It seems strange now to think back that we had to fight through so much to get to the day that was supposed to have been our beginning, but we did.

Had Dr. Wierwille not been so deeply involved in every step along the road it would be easy to think that what we had faced would have been a figment of imagination. The process to finally acquire a Way Corps location in Europe had been a longer, harder road than any of us would have anticipated. It was a road paved with treachery and disappointment, but finally a road that ended with the great delivering presence of God clearly manifested.

The final Way Corps location was not at all what we had anticipated. It is located in an area that is far removed from easily accessible transportation. It is also in a very difficult part of the British Isles to facilitate business needs, and perhaps worst of all, it is isolated from any large groups of believers. Our primary choice in England would have had good transportation, easy access to businesses that we had long dealt with and been close to a majority of the believers in Britain as well as being far more accessible to the majority of European believers.

There had been speculation during the WOW Festival 1984/85 that Dr. Wierwille and perhaps Mrs. Wierwille would come to visit us at the new Corps location in Gartmore, Scotland, shortly after the New Year's period of 1985. However, after the WOW Festival, I got a letter from Dr. Wierwille telling me that he would not be

coming until after the opening of The Word Over The World Auditorium, which was due to take place in March.

In one sense I was relieved and in another I was not. Though I would have loved to have seen Dr. Wierwille and to have had his counsel at the beginning of such a project, our new location was in Scotland which was not at all what we had wanted or planned for. The setting of it was breathtakingly beautiful, but its remoteness made doing business extremely difficult. This we suspected to be true before we made the final decision to accept Scotland, and in particular Gartmore. Knowing and coping are often very different things, and this was one of the times that proved this out.

We had lost the original location in England that we had selected because our own Way Corps graduates were not capable of handling things involved in getting a location. They just collapsed under the pressure. The increased difficulty in doing business in a remoter area of Scotland made me glad to have the extra time to prepare for Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille's visit.

There were massive things that needed attention immediately upon our moving in. There had been very little maintenance to the roofs and gutters and as a result there was considerable leakage in any event of rain. There was almost no hot water and the heating was very poor. We either froze or boiled, and if we boiled we did it at a great cost. There was so little hot water in fact that for quite a while we used the showers adjacent to the large gymnasium in the Knox Centre to shower, which meant walking across the centre of the campus in robes and towels in the wintertime.

When we accepted the decision to locate the Corps in Scotland, we had to evaluate whether Chris and Nancy Kent could handle the United Kingdom from Scotland or whether they would have to stay in Altrincham to be central to the country. Finally we decided that with the percentage of our work that was in the southern part of the country it was too much to tack on the additional drive to get to Manchester, let alone from there to the south coast. It became evident that for the work of the Ministry it would be more expedient to leave them in Altrincham. That left us without the man whom we had felt could handle our Way Builders and without Nancy whom we had thought would have been able to handle our bookkeeping.

One of the other things that we faced was Barbara's pregnancy. Having started in her pregnancy in England, we had originally contacted doctors in England thinking that we would be in the Cheshire area. The change from England to Scotland had put intense personal pressure on not only myself, but Barbara. Because we were operating basically with no support, her expertise in so many areas was required in order for mere survival, so she never really had time to investigate the various medical options that existed. In the end, she settled for the care of a local doctor who (with the grace of God) helped her through her pregnancy. We found out later of his intense dislike for Americans and extreme unwillingness to be helpful; however, (again the grace of God) she was referred to the correct people at the correct time for her prenatal care.

The times leading up to the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille were quite a challenge in themselves. Besides running the first year of a Way Corps programme outside of the United States and with multicultural and multilingual considerations, we were in a new location that had massive physical problems to overcome. We also had to acquire basically everything to outfit the location and do it in a culture and a business community that we were not experts in.

When we moved into the facility, there was one telephone which worked only sporadically. We had selected a telephone system to replace the single wall phone that existed upon arrival, but due to the costs involved and other factors we had decided to run all the internal cables ourselves. This allowed us also to run the audio and video lines at the same time, and we ended up running approximately one mile of cables all told. The telephone installation was to have been completed by 26 March, but the engineer did not even arrive to start the installation until 24 March. When he did arrive it was only because we had started making concerted complaints. It turned out when he did arrive that he did not even know how to fit the new switch equipment. It was all new to him and because I was familiar with the system it required considerable assistance on my part.

The project which was to have been completed by 26 March was in fact not completed until well after Dr. Wierwille's death in May.

Dr. Wierwille's previous visit to Europe in 1984 had overlapped at its tail-end with the commencement of our Advanced Class which we were holding in Bowdon, England, just adjacent to Altrincham where we then lived. During that Advanced Class, we made available, with Yann Beauvois, who had helped with the translation of the Advanced Class into French, running the French Advanced Class simultaneously with the running of the English Advanced Class in the same facility. We had shared the same meals and auxiliary tapes (with translation) and the Advanced Class had been handled for the French-speaking students in French, and for the balance of the class in English.

As I had been concerned with not only Dr. Wierwille's visit but with the massive problems that we still faced at that time, I attended portions of the French class but really I allowed Yann the freedom to handle it. It was during the course of running that Advanced Class in Bowdon that we began thinking and planning toward running an even bigger multilingual Advanced Class the following year.

We had decided on Bonn, Germany, as the location, and had decided to run English, French and Spanish and to have Wolfgang Schneider do the first live presentation of the German Advanced Class. It seemed the only feasible way we had of getting the Advanced Class to people who needed it in other languages. We did not have anybody else at the time who would have been qualified to have run an Advanced Class except myself, and I simply did not have the time to run four separate Advanced Classes in a year in four separate locations if we were going to start The Way Corps and if I was going to carry on with the remainder of the work.

Bonn was where Wolfgang lived, and I felt this would give him the greatest ease at handling the class. It proved a good choice too, because of coordination considerations. It was a central point for all to travel to easily and offered the facilities that we needed to do the class. I thought that since I spoke all the languages except German I would be able to instruct all four classes and have a class assistant for each class. Ray Brandt was to be my assistant in the English language class, Claus Kratzenberg in the German language class, Nicole Könz in the French language class and David Grimsditch in the Spanish language class.

One of the other problems we faced in putting together the multilingual Advanced Class was the production of the syllabi and other materials for the classes, but I am getting ahead of myself at this point, I really need to go back to the period following our acquisition of Gartmore House.

One of the challenges that we were faced with during the European WOW Festival and immediately following it was cooking. To start with we needed to get a kitchen equipped and stocked. Both Barbara and I are experienced at cooking for large groups and at menu preparation, etc. It was largely Barbara who prepared the food for the WOW Festival, and then directly following the Festival I personally began handling the responsibilities of cooking three meals a day.

We were genuinely concerned from the earliest days of the consideration of a Way Corps in Europe with the quality of the food. This is something that Dr. Wierwille and I talked over long before we ever came to Europe. He indicated that one of the things of prime importance in a European Way Corps would be a good diet with things that were readily available to hand so that our Corps in Europe could learn to eat properly. Dr. Wierwille had noticed that there was a tremendous weakness among the European Corps as regards their eating habits. He pointed this out to me before we ever left the U.S.A. and I knew that it would be quite a challenge and one of our major considerations.

We advertised locally for a cook, and the closest we came was in acquiring the help of a young man from Aberfoyle, the adjacent village, whose help was more along the lines of cleaning and washing-up. We were very blessed that he ended up taking the Power for Abundant Living class though.

I continued to do the cooking, working with some of the In-residence Corps as we went and finally took on trial one of our Advanced Class graduates from the Continent. He had the sense-knowledge qualifications to be able to handle the responsibility, but within a period of three weeks or less it became quite evident that he would not work out. So once again I assumed the responsibilities of cooking three meals a day in the kitchen in addition to handling The Way Corps programme and handling the work of the European Region. This also included all the menu preparation as well as all of the shopping to buy in the goods for the meals. I suppose I could have compromised and just let it go, but I did not feel spiritually right about it, so I did not.

The first European Corps opened directly after the WOW Festival. All of these things were taking a toll on me physically. By the time we actually acquired a location, I was quite tired from the concerted efforts I had exerted physically, mentally and spiritually. When we lost our initial location, time was short, so it required extreme effort to locate and evaluate other available properties. Even though we needed to move quickly, careful evaluation was required so that we would not find ourselves in a bind legally or caught in a bad business deal. This meant learning the legal considerations which differed from England to Scotland after having recently learned the English. Once acquisition was made, there was a voluminous amount of work to do in stocking the location so that we could begin to operate.

Almost from the earliest days of The Way Corps we began to experience serious problems with a number of the senior Corps. Their attitudes and thinking were very far from what Way Corps' should be. It turned into a confrontation battle from early on in the year, and in fact never ended until we dismissed a number of them almost at the end of the year. This made life difficult, as we had to watch everything that was done, and really the year turned into an exercise in confrontation for large portions of the time.

One of the occurrences of these problems that overlapped with the Advanced Class preparation from this was when a member of the senior Corps had indicated that he was capable of fixing and maintaining printing presses and of doing offset printing. I gave him the responsibility of helping to put back together the offset press which I had taken apart into its major subsections to bring it from Altrincham when we moved. When he was finished there was a pile of spare parts and a press that did not operate properly. I had to get involved in getting it taken back apart and putting it together properly so that we could print.

Once we had done that, we had another problem, that of the platemaker. The platemaker that we had been using in Altrincham had broken just prior to our coming to Scotland. It was, in fact, an old, very slow platemaker that we had gotten secondhand, so we took in a photocopier that was meant to make direct-image offset masters. This deal on the photocopier which we entered into very shortly after the New Year's period turned out to be the one that taught us how difficult it is to trade in Scotland, and especially how difficult it is being an American. The issue of the photocopier/platemaker never really did get resolved and in the end we had to buy an Addressograph Multigraph platemaker which worked very well.

Even with the proper platemaker, our senior Corps man ended up wasting about six times more paper than he ever produced finished copy. Furthermore, he never had the honesty to come and tell us. It was when we found the evidence in the trash one day that we knew we were in trouble. So on my shoulders fell the responsibility for printing all the Advanced Class materials for our multilingual Advanced Classes.

One of the additional disadvantages to having to have a Corps location in Scotland as opposed to England was the need to re-establish business contacts. Every time you have to start over in business it takes time and work to develop good business relations. We had had quite a good reputation among the firms that we traded with regularly in England. When we started over in Scotland, it seemed to be a very challenging adventure because we seemed to be besieged by business "cowboys" out to take advantage of us, and we still had to rely quite heavily on our English contacts to fulfill our needs.

During all of this time Barbara was getting larger and larger and going slower and slower. Even though she was large and going slowly she still had to maintain some very major responsibilities. Shortly after the Festival it had become obvious that if the Ministry was going to survive financially we would have to do all the bookkeeping for the entire UK Ministry at Gartmore, rather than let it stay in Altrincham. Things were just

moving so quickly and every decision seemed to be so major that it was the best that we kept track of everything. This responsibility fell largely to Barbara, and she quite admirably handled it on a day-by-day basis. At the same time that all of these other things were running, the Corps graduate that we had as our secretary was proving not to be capable of coping with the responsibilities of the job. It finally became evident that if she was going to stay happy and we were going to have the work of the Ministry done we would have to change secretarial help. She left us to go on the field in the spring, and even before she left, Barbara and I reassumed her full responsibilities until we got a new secretary in the summer.

When we finally got to the time of the Advanced Class, The Way Corps were on the field as Lightbearers. Directly following their departure those of us who were left (both Staff and those Corps who were to be Staff for the Advanced Class) began printing all of the materials for the Advanced Class. This took approximately twenty hours a day for a number of days so that we could pack everything and be ready to go. We loaded ourselves and all the equipment for the class into one of our vans and drove to Germany. That meant that, as I was the only driver on the trip, I drove to Germany from Scotland basically with one rest stop, and that on the beat crossing.

When we actually began to get involved in the Advanced Class, I was in for a rather unpleasant surprise initially. Claus Kratzenberg who was to be the assistant for the German class really proved inadequate. He would not take direction from Wolfgang, who was the teacher in this instance, nor from me. He had pretty well made up his mind that he was going things his way and everybody else could do their own thing. I tried to work with him, but by the end of the second teaching session of the class it became evident that the German class would be in drastic problems if we allowed him to continue in his responsibilities. This meant that I would have to handle the German class primarily and not split myself evenly between the classes as I had anticipated.

This presented another problem. The Advanced Class was supposed to have been an opportunity to physically try and overcome some of the exhaustion that was catching up with me. The daily sessions had been scheduled so that the English, French and Spanish language classes had Twigs in the afternoon. We had placed Twig session for the German language class in the mornings so Wolfgang would only have two hours to teach at once. To get the equivalent third hour in, there was a teaching session in the afternoon while the other language classes were in Twigs. My intention had been to have an opportunity to rest and exercise in the afternoons to try and overcome my growing exhaustion. When I inherited the German language class, the time that I had anticipated having was no longer available to me.

The entire Advanced Class seemed to be plagued with problems. Spiritually it was a very high time with a great enthusiasm among the believers, great deliverance and wonderful fellowship. However, during the course of the class it became more and more evident that the quality of the translated works was dubious. The French was clearly deficient and in places quite misleading. The Spanish was not laid out at all in the way that I had seen Dr. Wierwille lay classes out with the attention to detail that he paid. We discovered linguistic problems in both classes as well as inconsistencies in the class layouts, and it took an enormous amount of work to try to keep the classes as a whole on an even keel. By God's mercy and grace the class did prove to be a success, and at the end of the class I returned home to Gartmore to get ready for the next two big events, the birth of our baby and the visit of the Wierwilles.

Barbara had very kindly held on to our baby, and I was able to be there for the birth. In fact we were home for a few days before she actually gave birth to our baby. Just five days before Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille's visit, Abigail Nicole was born in Stirling hospital. The joy of having a new face in the family also added the presence of my parents. My mother had come for the birth and had been very helpful in taking care of Rebecca so that I did not have to be concerned with that aspect. At the very end of her visit my father came for one day to see Abigail as well as to see our new entrenchment in Scotland.

The other thing that really required attention and supervision was the preparation for Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille's visit. We had been redoing one of the sections in Gartmore House for a suite of rooms which we called the "ELO Suite". It was not in particularly good shape when we started and required an extensive amount of work to get it ready. This meant buying furniture, painting, hanging wallpaper, refitting the bathroom, laying carpets, fitting a kitchen and repairing floors as well as installing a workable heating system. All of this we managed to do and have completed by the time of the Wierwille's visit.

As the time of Dr. Wierwille's visit drew closer, I became very concerned with his comfort, starting with the journey from the airport to the campus. He was flying into Prestwick Airport, from which we generally estimate

transit time at between two and two and one-half hours. It can be less than that, but because it requires driving through sections of Glasgow during business times of the day with traffic to consider, we had to allow that much transit time. I became quite concerned with whether he would be too tired after the transatlantic flight to adequately be comfortable in the car for that length of time. I began contacting helicopter firms to try and contract a helicopter to take us from Prestwick to Gartmore and land in the front of the house by the sundial. We did in fact contact and successfully contract with a helicopter firm that would have permitted us to have him from the airport to Gartmore in approximately twenty minutes. I thought that this was a workable solution and we made the necessary arrangements.

In order to accomplish this, Chris Kent was going to accompany me, and we were to leave from Gartmore at 7:30 in the morning to drive to Edinburgh, where we would fly with the helicopter to Prestwick and then back to Gartmore. At approximately 7:28 a.m. the pilot rang us to say that Edinburgh was closed in with fog, and so was Prestwick, thus we could not do the trip in the helicopter. This was not only a change in plans but required some very quick radical shifting, as we had less than an hour and one-half to get to Prestwick Airport. As soon as we reorganized ourselves to be able to accommodate Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille in the car, we left for Prestwick and, despite heavy fog on our journey and the rush-hour traffic in Glasgow that we experienced, we made the transit in one hour and eighteen minutes. It was quite a challenge on the way home to try not to go as fast as we had on the way down.

We arrived at Prestwick Airport and parked in the car park and began to look for where incoming passengers would be. The board said that the flight that Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille had flown on had already landed and that the passengers were in customs. In fact passengers with luggage-check tags from their flight were coming out of the doors from customs, and we began to look around to see if Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille had already come out. As we did not see them, we waited at the doors. They were the second group of people to come out after our arrival at the doors.

Dr. Wierwille did look very tired indeed, and I was so sorry that we were not able to provide for him the helicopter that I still think was the right solution, but he was in good humour despite his apparent fatigue. When we arrived at the campus he graciously greeted all the Corps and Staff, also welcoming Abigail to the Household. Shortly after that, I escorted Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille upstairs to their Suite where we began unpacking them.

I helped Dr. Wierwille to undress, so that he could rest, as I had done so many times before. We put his clothes away neatly and as I was helping him out of his socks and shoes he started talking about how blessed he was to have me help him again. What followed, however, was less expected. It was not his general custom to start talking about deep things right off the bat. Usually when he had something to talk about with me it would have come up later on in a conversation or visit but not this time. He told me how Peter Esmond had blessed him in helping take care of him. He spoke of how he was very blessed with both Peter and Christie and their hearts for him. He said that Peter did not have the abilities that I had in practical fields but that having him to help was better than having Bill Warga He said that Bill was very talented and capable but spiritually dishonest. He never had been able to really trust Bill; Bill's heart had not been to genuinely, lovingly help Doctor. It was not usual for the things of his heart to be so close to the surface, but I attributed it to his physical condition of being tired from the journey and did not really consider any deeper implications at that point.