



## *Treasures Among Us*

**Joyce Smith**

Joyce was born in St. Louis. When she was in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, her dad bought a farm near Bland, Missouri. At first, she and her older sister went to the Oak Forrest county school, which was about four miles away. They had about a two-mile walk through the woods. With no path, they followed the phone wire from their crank phone at home to the gravel road and then a couple more miles to the school. When her sister graduated from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Joyce was too little to walk to school by herself through the woods, so her dad paid tuition for her to attend Bland school so she could ride the bus with her sister.

When she graduated from high school, she knew exactly what she wanted to do—go to school to be a beautician. She and her girlfriend, who had been her classmate, stayed together and attended beautician school together in Maplewood. Walking to school in Maplewood one day, she ran into George Smith, who had just gotten out of the military. When he and she were attending school in Bland, they had ridden the school bus together. Since they were both from Bland, she started riding with him from Maplewood to her family home on weekends. They started dating and got married a few months later.

They lived in St. Louis two years, then rented a home in St. James for a short while. After that they bought their first home with three acres of land, a milk cow, and a pony. While living there near Flag Spring for seven years, George attended barber school in St. Louis through the week and came home on the weekends. When he

finished barber school, he opened his own barber shop in Rolla.

Then George realized his dream when they bought a 200-acre farm that had been homesteaded by her great grandparents, the Glenn's. The farm had been in her family through three generations. They raised hogs and Black Angus cattle while he also ran his barber shop. They sold that farm 17 years later. When their boys were young, they were active leaders in the Evening Star 4-H Club in St. James. Both boys showed cattle and did well in 4-H.

They then bought the 80-acre place where she continues to live. George built their house, the barn, and all the fences. They raised Black Angus cattle there until his health failed. He passed away in 2010, and she still misses him. He was a barber, a farmer, a carpenter and did his own veterinary work. He did everything from doctoring sick animals ... to stitching them up if they got cut ... to doing lifts in harnesses if one broke a leg.

Once when George was installing her washer and dryer, he accidentally cut off his finger. They retrieved the finger and rushed to the doctor in Rolla. He sewed it back on with no guarantee that the reattachment would "take." It did, but his finger was always stiff and the end of it was always shiny because the blood could not circulate properly. They were just glad he got to keep the finger.

George and Joyce have two sons, Steve and Michael. Steve still lives on the home place, and Michael lives in Russellville and also serves the Vienna Church of Christ as their preacher. Joyce was 13 years old living in St. Louis when she obeyed the gospel and was baptized. Her dad preached in area churches that had no regular preachers.

Joyce has had a varied career over the years. In addition to working as a beautician, she worked seven years at St.

James Head Start as a Social Services aid. She also worked as a Nutrition Education Assistant with a federal program on a two-year contract. Her job was to visit in the homes of disadvantaged families where she educated them on how to make nutritious meals. She also taught their children how to make cookies and other things as well. She worked at K-Mart for 16 years as supervisor over the cashiers, a job from which she retired. She is now doing volunteer work as a Senior Companion. She also walks 2-3 miles each day to stay healthy and active.

Her favorite book was given to her years ago by her dad, and it is titled, "As a Man Thinketh in His Heart," by Batsell Barret Baxter. She also loves the song, "I Believe."

In her early years at Rolla Church of Christ, Joyce taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade and/or kindergarten. She has helped with many funeral dinners and has always practiced hospitality by taking food to homes in times of sickness or death. She has worked (and continues to do so) at the church's Clothing Room Ministry.

She laughingly says she "collects shoes!" When she was young, her dad had one job as foreman of a shoe factory. She wound up with lots of shoes and says that shoes were about the only things she had to move when she and George married. She has a very small foot, so when she finds her size, she "buys all of them!" Her feet are small, but she is of very slight build in general. Her son, Steve, says she is always saying, "If only I was bigger!"

She believes digging in the dirt gets us closer to God. When they moved to their current place, they went on trail rides and did lots of camping. One time they loaded up their horses and traveled to Colorado with several other families. They stayed at a place owned by a friend who had taught Ag in the St. James schools, and they all enjoyed riding in the mountains. In the week they were in the west, they also went to Cheyenne Frontier Days, one of the biggest rodeos in the country. Her favorite place is the 80-acre farm she and George purchased quite a few years back. She enjoys walking in the field, "where it's peaceful. It's a good place to ponder things." She enjoys outside work, even mowing grass.

Joyce didn't think she had anything interesting to share with others, but as you can see, she is a real Treasure Among Us.

**NOTE:** This is the 27<sup>th</sup> in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.



### *An Interview with Desirae Stirling*

**Tell us a little about who you are:** My name is Desirae Stirling, and I grew up attending the Church of Christ in Rolla, Missouri. When I was almost 16 years old, I came to the Lord after resisting Him for several years. He finally captured my heart. Since then, He's brought me through many life changes, including running my family's household for my last two years of high school, attending college at Harding University, and living everywhere from Springfield, Missouri, to Georgia, to Greece, and most recently, Mozambique.

**What is it that draws you to the mission field?** Even before I obeyed Christ, I wanted to travel the world. Mission work lined up with that desire and my new-found passion for God. In reality, it has morphed into something much different. I've traveled enough now that I no longer glorify it; living out of a suitcase and trying to build relationships across the language gap have their drawbacks. I don't mean to say that I hate traveling, but the desire to see the world is no longer driving me. Now, I want to serve in the mission field because I want to spend my life investing in what really matters—because I no longer feel led to stay in the US, and because many foreign countries have much greater need than we do.

**What do you anticipate doing? Where would you like to serve? Why?** My hope is to work in a foreign orphanage. That's what I've been preparing for these last few years at



college. I am considering going to French-speaking Africa (particularly Burkina Faso), Haiti, or Romania. I have missionary contacts in each of these countries. Other than Romania, those locations allow me to use the French I've learned. As for Romania, it's strange to say, but it's just been on my mind for years. The need there is very great—it is Europe's highest ranking country for abandoned children. As for working at an orphanage, it lines up my place of passion with the world's place of need. I love children, and orphaned children are maybe the most vulnerable members of any society. I can't bear the thought of any child without a single adult to love them.

**What do you know of the culture of the country (countries) you have chosen?** I know they each are plagued with poverty. Poverty leads to orphans, whether due to AIDS and disease, war, or abandonment of young children because families cannot afford them. And third world countries don't provide quality care for orphans because of a lack of government funding. Haiti is crippled by natural disasters and deforestation. Both Haiti and Burkina Faso have welcoming and friendly people. Romanians will be harder to get to know, but they are in great need, still recovering from the Soviet occupation. Again, I have contacts in these countries so I can always learn more through interviewing them.

**Do you have previous mission experience?** You could say I have quite a bit of short-term experience for someone still in college. I have been on week-long mission trips to hurricane-ravaged Texas and later Louisiana; inner city St. Louis; the poor and broken town of Dermott, Arkansas; and an orphanage in Ensenada, Mexico. I also did a six-week mission internship this past summer in Mozambique, which was more about learning than serving. Of course I still taught Bible classes and ministered to people during that time, so it is a bit similar to a mission trip in that way. I've also done outreach in Little Rock to victims of sex-trafficking, and I served at a soup kitchen for Muslim refugees while in Athens, Greece.

**What effect did that experience have on you?** In general, my travels have greatly expanded my worldview. I no longer think of life from only the American viewpoint, but I can (slightly) comprehend other views of how the world works. I have also learned to be quicker to give thanks and slower to complain, to be humble because my way is not the only way, and to love those very different from me. I can no longer forget that many people have extreme needs that I could help meet. And all it would require of me is sacrifice. But they are so worth it.

**Do you have training for the mission field? If so, what training have you received?** I consider my time in Mozambique as the best training I've received to this point. Following experienced missionaries as they lived out their everyday life gave me an awesome inside look at what it is to be a missionary. I have also attended several missionary conferences and Bible classes. By the time I graduate Harding in May, I will have taken 14 Bible classes. These have given me head knowledge and a sweeping understanding of what the Kingdom looks like. But again, the hands-on training I received during my internship in Mozambique is incomparable.

**How long do you anticipate serving?** As far as orphanage work goes, I'm looking at 2-5 years at this point. But I'll be serving my Lord as long as I live, and I wouldn't be surprised if I am led again to the mission field. Regardless, I am

certain His plans for me include outreach, whether in the States or not.

**What are the two or three most important things that you would tell other young women who are preparing to serve?** I firmly believe the single most important thing any Christian can do is invest in their relationship with God. Jesus clearly says that we can do nothing on our own strength (John 15:4-5). I believe that outreach, in whatever form, is God's desire for every Christian, not just for ministers, elders, and missionaries. However, if you plan on spending your life explicitly growing the Kingdom, a strong relationship with God is crucial to effectivity and sustainability. How can we pour out Jesus to others if we are not full of Him ourselves? So I would tell them to spend ever-increasing time in prayer, to learn how to understand God's truth in His word, and to practice thankfulness and worship in everything. And always seek more faith.

Seek out mentors, older ladies who have served the Lord faithfully, who have the fruit of the Spirit, and who are willing to invest in you and pray for you. This is invaluable. Never let fear make your decisions. Fear is not from God. He asks us to have faith; and as we do so, He gives us only strength and confidence. He is a good Father, who knows how to give good gifts, even beyond what we could imagine.

Desirae will graduate May 7<sup>th</sup> from Harding University with a degree in Leadership and Ministry.



## WANDERING

I used to work in a wonderful little nursing home with very interesting and diverse patients. One of the types of patients that require the closest monitoring are those who 'wander.' These patients have dementia and are confused and easily distracted. They frequently think they are independent, not realizing their weaknesses and their need for help. They are unaware of safety precautions, putting themselves at a significant risk of falling. Patients who wander are not satisfied where they are at and do not realize the protection and safety found within their boundaries. The patient I am describing is not the one who is adamant about going home, seeking to exit at every chance, and is an escape artist; this is the one who may go into other patients rooms and meddle with their things or walk up and down the hall all day.



The dictionary definition of wander is: to leave home, to ramble here and there without any certain course, not under the guidance of reason. Wandering does not have a distinct purpose and is not meaningfully guided; it is a

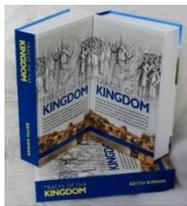
rambling. There is nothing rational about it, yet many intelligent and educated Christians do it often, just like the dementia patients I worked with, except the dementia patients don't know any better.

Wandering Christians, like my patients, are confused and distracted, possibly by things of the world, or maybe by a false doctrine. They may have an attitude of independence and feel like they don't need God; all the while not realizing how weak they really are. These Christians need help, but may be afraid to seek it because they know they will have to make some changes. They may be convicted but too stubborn to act on the conviction. While wandering Christians may be aware of their safety precautions within their church, they choose to disregard them, increasing their risk of becoming a fallen Christian. This person is not content and does not realize what their discontent is doing to them.

These wandering Christians, like my wandering patients, need to be treated with compassion, yet with urgency for their safety. The longer my patients wander, the more likely they are to have a serious fall, perhaps with fatal consequences. Proverbs 21:16 tells us, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." What a frightening thought!

What precautions do you have in place to prevent wandering? For my patients, there are alarms in place at the doors which let us know when someone is leaving. Who will let you know if you are wandering? What distractions in your life need removed? Are you too independent? Are there boundaries you are pushing? Are there doors you need to close in your life?

©Samantha Sidwell  
Rolla, MO



◆◆◆◆◆  
**BOOK REVIEW**  
*Traces of the Kingdom*  
by KEITH SISMAN

"Traces of the Kingdom" is a fascinating look at the history of the Lord's church in England. The author begins with an overview of the beginnings of the church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and dates the first traces of apostasy as beginning after the second Jewish revolt against Rome, circa 132-135 AD. Contrary to popular belief, the church of our Lord did not totally die out for several centuries. Instead, it survived in pockets of Europe. The confusion comes from various derogatory names that were applied to Christians by their adversaries. Despite hardships and persecution, their beliefs and teachings were consistent with those of the first century church.

Brother Sisman traces the earliest record of Christianity in Britain as being 37 AD, not long removed from the Day of Pentecost. He describes Christianity in Britain as being of Palestinian (scriptural) influence rather than the later Roman origin. When the Roman church began "evangelizing" Britain, it was at the point of a sword, not by scriptural persuasion. Pagans were taken into the Roman church, and many of their pagan practices were incorporated in the church. Even their places of worship were used as Roman worship sites. For instance, the Arch-Druid became the Arch-Bishop.

New Testament Christians were severely persecuted by the Roman church, and many were tortured, then burned at the stake if they refused to accept catholic teachings. Even though they were so heavily persecuted, they persevered and survived many years of horrible treatment. When the Reformation came, it offered little relief from persecution for New Testament Christians for they were then persecuted by both the Roman church and the Reformers.

In England, it was illegal for common citizens to own a Bible. "The consequences of owning a Bible included being burned alive." Early Christians, however, hand copied scriptures and assisted in producing Bibles and tracts, etc. "In 1643 it was illegal to preach against infant baptism and preach believers' baptism."

After reading this book, I will never again sing, "Faith of Our Fathers," without thinking of brothers and sisters in Christ whose faith was so strong they truly endured "dungeon, fire and sword," as the first verse says. "Traces of the Kingdom" is not an easy book to read because it is written in British style English and includes quotes from ancient Celtic languages. However, it is very informative and impressive. Brother Sisman's research and scholarship included access to the Rare Books Room at the Cambridge University library. Each chapter of his book is followed with detailed end notes of the sources he used in writing this book. For those who love the history of the Lord's church, this is indeed an important book.

Reviewed by Evelyn Waite  
©2016

◆◆◆◆◆



*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on Resources, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

◆◆◆◆◆