



## *Treasures Among Us*

**BARBARA (PAINTER) COX**

Barbara (Painter) Cox is no stranger to many of us. Born in Ironton, Missouri, she lived in the country 30-40 miles out of town, the only one of four siblings born in a hospital. The family lived on a farm with no electricity or running water. A cold water spring nearby provided “refrigeration” for food. They had a large garden, and her mom canned much of the produce on a wood stove (imagine how hot that would be on a sweltering summer day!).

Her mom sewed almost all their clothes. When it was time for a new dress, Barbara got to choose the feed sack from which it would be made. The kids had no toys, so they played outside most of the time. She loved to play with rocks and used them for the outline of a playhouse. She still loves rocks and has a whole collection from around the world.

The family moved to Potosi, population about 1,800, where she went third grade through high school. Her parents had little education and were unable to assist much with homework. After high school graduation, a friend recommended she interview with the bank. She was hired on the spot to run the proof machine and worked there from 1960-1964. She had quite a career working in several banks over the years.

She obeyed the gospel and was baptized when she was 14, a very joyous occasion for her. There wasn't a Church of Christ in Potosi at that time, so the family drove to Flat River for church. That's where she met Wilton Painter. At first it was a casual acquaintance. He worked in Potosi

one summer, and they got to know each other a little better, still with no romantic relationship.

In 1964, she was living at her parents' home while working at a bank. That January, a calendar came in the mail from MFA Insurance with Wilton Painter listed as the agent. A few days later, a letter from him arrived. By this time, he was in Indiana and wanted to know if they could get together. A long distance relationship ensued from January through August. In February when she had a three-day weekend, Wilton flew her to Indiana to meet his mom (he was only 16 when his dad died). He drove her back to Missouri and asked her to marry him.

Later while he was on leave from the National Guard, Wilton was staying at her parents' home. Just before he had to go back, they sneaked out of the house in the middle of the night and eloped! They were married August 5, 1964, in Arlington, Virginia. They settled in Bismarck, Missouri, and Wilton preached in a small congregation there. He had no formal training but learned from older preachers who mentored him. They lived at Bismarck when their first child, James, was born. While Wilton finished his degree at Harding, they spent a year and a half in Searcy, Arkansas. Their second son, John, was born there. Once Wilton had his degree in hand, he applied for and got a teaching job at Ironton, Missouri.

Later he went to Conway, Arkansas, for his Masters in Special Education. He taught in Ironton before applying with the State of Missouri as a vocational counselor to help people with disabilities to get jobs. He requested placement in Rolla; so before going for his interview, they visited the Rolla Church of Christ. They found a very friendly congregation and were well received.

During their years in Rolla, they once lived right behind the Eudaly family and became very close to them. Bosco and Tina became their second parents. The Painters

went to them for advice and left children with them when they needed to be out of town. They didn't plan to have any more children but were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Lydia, in 1975. Barbara describes her as "God's gift." Lydia was the only one of their children to go to the same school system for all 13 years.

James, John, and Lydia all went to Little Prairie Bible Camp when they were old enough, and Barbara cooked while her children camped. Once the kids got older, they worked as junior counselors and counselors at LPBC; and Wilton served as president of the board for a while. These days, James brings his own two daughters to LPBC.

Once her children were school age, Barbara began working at a local Savings & Loan. After a few years, she applied for the position of City Collector. It was the last day to apply, but her interview with the mayor, a councilman, and the assistant city collector went well—and she got the job! She worked there 11 years before they moved to Georgia.

By then, Lydia was married and living in Ellijay, Georgia. Wilton had worked 30 years with the State and had just retired. Lydia told him that at her school, a position was open for a school teacher. He interviewed for the job over Labor Day weekend and got it.

He had accumulated six months of sick leave with the State because he rarely had any illnesses. He decided to have a physical exam before they moved to Georgia. On Barbara's last day with the City, the doctor called Wilton back in. He was informed that he had colon cancer. Their moving truck was coming the next day, and Barbara had just finished up her job. The doctor recommended they go ahead and move, and he would connect Wilton with a doctor in Atlanta.

Wilton started his new job after Labor Day but had surgery in Atlanta in October. Once he recovered sufficiently, he taught until December, then had another surgery and went back to school in January. Pathology reports indicated there was no need for chemo or radiation. He taught just the one year, then resigned to drive a school bus and work as a substitute teacher. That summer they vacationed out west and went to Yellowstone Bible Camp. Wilton decided to preach full time and was hired by the Pisgah Church of Christ just outside Ellijay.

Their son and daughter-in-law, John and Cindy, came to visit for a week, then went on to Orlando where John had a work conference. Cindy was experiencing a stiff arm, then started dragging one foot. Wilton and Barbara went

to Orlando to help with their little daughter, because Cindy was in extreme pain. She was soon diagnosed with a brain tumor and was gone within a few months. Barbara not only lost her daughter-in-law but also her friend when Cindy died. Wilton got a leave of absence from the church in Georgia, and they came back to Rolla to help John with his little daughter. Eventually, she and Wilton went back to Georgia; and John and his little daughter moved there also. Morgan grew up and is a student at Faulkner University. John eventually met and married Jennifer Holloway at the church in Ellijay, and they now have Maggie, 13.

Wilton's cancer came back, this time in the lymph nodes all over his body. It was inoperable. He fought it for two years before his death. Many close friends from Rolla went to Georgia to support them during this very hard time. Wilton's attitude was always, "Live or die, either way, I win." His only reservation was leaving Barbara behind. He had traveled to Jamaica on mission trips, and memorial donations after his passing were used to purchase white plastic chairs which were then sent to the church in Jamaica. Each chair had a plate attached stating that it was in memory of Wilton Painter and donated by the Church of Christ in Ellijay, Georgia. She also sent all his dress clothes to the men of the church in Jamaica.

After Wilton died in 2002, Nettie Martin called her and invited her to go on a cruise with several ladies from the Rolla church. She started traveling to see friends in Missouri and going on cruises with church ladies from Missouri and Georgia, but after 4-5 years, she was very lonely. She came across a Church of Christ Singles website, where she saw Alan Cox's profile. He and his wife had been in a head-on collision on their way to a gospel meeting. His wife and her sister were killed in the accident, and Alan was seriously injured. His children thought they were going to lose their dad, too, and had to close his computer store. He went to Omaha to his son's home to recover. He eventually placed his profile of the site; Barbara read it and wrote a short note to him. He responded, and they corresponded for a while.

They were married that October at the Ellijay Church of Christ. For eight years, they rotated between his home in Texas and her home in Georgia. After Alan's open heart surgery in 2015, both his children and hers decided they couldn't drive across the country between their homes every four months. They are now selling Barbara's house in Georgia, and their plan is to relocate to Springfield, Missouri, where one of Alan's children lives.

Barbara has learned many lessons in her life and shares this advice for women who are newly widowed: "Go home, sleep in that bed; and if you will be late coming home, leave some lights on and a radio playing so it won't feel quite so empty and lonely when you get home." Barbara sums it all up by saying, "God's love covers me. I should not worry about 'stuff.' My home is in heaven." She has long been a "treasure" to many.

**NOTE:** *This is the 29<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.*



## SICKNESS ALL AROUND US

With all the rain we've received this year, it seems there's also a lot more coughing and sneezing going on. Several have been home with upper respiratory illnesses.



When we hear that someone is not feeling well, we sympathize with them and even offer up prayers on their behalf. If it's a family member, we see to their needs such as plenty of fluids to drink, possibly medication of some kind, and a quiet room in which to sleep.

But there's an even bigger epidemic going on all around us. The sickness is called sin. Every one of us comes in contact with it, but if our resistance has been lowered, we are even more susceptible. That's one of the meanings when the Bible says for those of you who are strong to help those who are weak.

How do we help those who are overcome with sin? We offer up prayers on their behalf. We try to help with their needs: Living Water, which is Christ Himself, medication from the Great Physician, and a quiet time to gently and lovingly talk to them about their sin and what can be done to have it taken away.

People don't want to be sick, but sometimes they just don't know where to find the right cure. We need to share the saving message with those we meet every day.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX, ©July, 2015



## WE WILL MEET AGAIN

Today I visited a dying woman, who was diagnosed with a terrible cancer less than a year ago. She was doing pretty well for a while; but this type of cancer is dreadful. It demands the life of its victims. No matter how demanding it is and that it eventually takes its victims'

lives, cancer cannot conquer the eternal soul. This woman is a Christian, and she is a victor because she belongs to God. She commented that God creates our bodies to want to live and our spirits to go home to God. She fretted that preparing her family for her departure is the hardest part—she knows they will never be ready for her departure. She said she will eventually just have to go anyway.

She also recounted the good days she has been allowed to live—worshiping with several congregations over the past months and visiting with lots of family members. She was grateful for other things, too,—good medical care, cards from friends, all of the many kindnesses shown her. She had such a wonderful attitude. I heard no bitterness that this happened to her; no self-pity. I did see eagerness to be home, to see and experience that beautiful eternal home, that home where there will be no more pain, suffering, grief, loneliness, hunger, thirst, or death.

Though this is most likely the last time I will see her in this life, it will not be the last time I see her. We will meet again some sweet day in that eternal home. Her journey will soon be over. The completion date of my journey is yet to be determined. Both she and I belong to God. His glorious Son is both her Savior and mine. She and I are sisters. Sisters in Christ. In Him we have our hope and peace.

What a blessed privilege it is to die in the Lord!



My friend passed away just a week or so after our last contact. Cancer took her physical life, but it was not successful in conquering her spirit. She has returned to God, and we will meet again some sweet day in, "the land beyond the river, that we call the sweet forever."



As I make one further revision to this piece, my other friend in Texas is near death. Her sister wrote the following:

"My sister is losing the battle. She is in hospital hospice. Her beautiful, faith-filled attitude remains. She looks for the good in everything. Our prayers continue as only God knows what is best, and He has been with her constantly through all this difficult time."

Sondra and I never met personally in this life, but we will meet some sweet day. What a glorious day that will be!

Evelyn Waite, ©August 3, 2014;

Revised August 18, 2014;

Second revision September 2, 2015



## THE PERFECT CITY

On Highway 50, just outside of Halstead, Kansas, there is a large billboard that says: “Home, Health, Happiness—Halstead!” Obviously, the Chamber of Commerce is advertising that Halstead is a good place to live. They want you to believe the city has good housing in a clean, healthy environment with medical services and leisure activities available. The sign implies that the city has a low crime rate, no slums, and no hazardous landfills.

Ironically, the billboard advertising the goodness of Halstead is located next to a cemetery. The cemetery bears silent testimony that the billboard does not tell the whole truth. The cemetery testifies that in Halstead, there is death, disease, sorrow, and loneliness. The cemetery is evidence that Halstead is not the perfect city.

The perfect city has neither funeral homes nor cemeteries. There is no death in the perfect city. The



perfect city has no police force, and no doors are ever barred or locked there. Its streets are always safe because there is no night there. The lawns in the perfect city have no weeds.

No thorns or thistles grow in its gardens because there is no curse in the perfect city. The perfect city has no temple or cathedral—God’s presence does not dwell in a building. Instead, God dwells with His people, and they see His face continually.

The perfect city is the “New Jerusalem.” Those people whose sins have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and whose names are written in the Book of Life are citizens of the city and will dwell there forever.

David Mills  
Via Price Above Rubies

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## God’s Simple Plan

I was watching, “What If...” and was intrigued by a dialog that took place with the star of the film and an “angel.”

The man asked how he could stop, “doing everything wrong.” The angel replied, “That’s simple. Just do everything right.”

“How do I do that?”



“First, Jesus loves you, so you love everyone else. Secondly, God sacrificed everything so He could be with you, so you sacrifice everything.”

“That’s not simple,” the man snapped back.

The angel smiled. “Sure it is...it’s just hard.”

Living the Christian life is not always easy—but it is simple. All you have to do is follow God’s plan for salvation.

The Old Testament is full of prophecies telling the people that the Savior was coming. The New Testament tells us that He did come, and He brought a simple plan for our redemption. The New Testament also tells us that He is coming again.

The simple answer? Be ready to meet Him when He gets here!

Jeanetta Watkins, Adamsville, Alabama  
©June, 2014

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Four years ago, two congregations of the Lord’s church merged in Rolla, Missouri, thanks to God’s guidance and the leadership of the elders of the two congregations. The annual reunion celebration will be September 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is invited to celebrate with us that day. Former members of either congregation are especially encouraged to attend.

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*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.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on Resources, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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