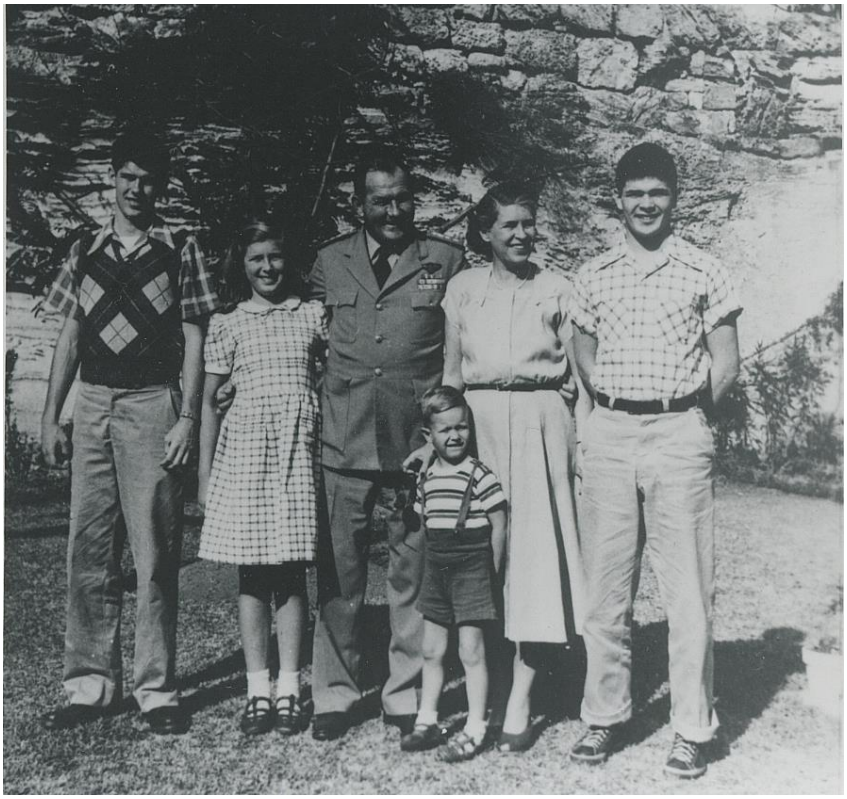
MERCY ALL THE WAY

A STUDY IN GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE



Autobiography of Wright Doyle (Dai De Li)

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All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version

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INTRODUCTION

Why this book?

Two questions face anyone who would pick up this book:

Who is Wright Doyle?

And why is he writing an autobiography?

To answer the first question: I am a man "standing under the mercy of God," to quote a recent political candidate.

I am also a missionary to the Chinese. Thus the sub-title to this volume: "The Making of a Missionary." Although I do not live among the Chinese at this time, since 1975 my life has centered upon ministry to Chinese, a ministry based now in the United States.

Why am I writing the story of my life up to this point? Hardly anyone knows who I am; don't autobiographies come only from famous people?

In short, am I not highly presumptuous to expect anyone to read about the life of an insignificant, third-rate missionary? Probably so!

Parts of my life may sound like that of any ordinary American youth: I worked as a bag boy in a grocery store, bank runner, stock clerk; I was abandoned by a high-school sweetheart and told by my college girlfriend that she didn't want to marry me. Ho hum.

In fact, however, my life has not lacked interest: In addition to Richard Nixon, I have met actor John Wayne and President Chiang Kai-shek of China; lived in Bermuda, Puerto Rico, Singapore and Taiwan; traveled to Europe, Africa, Asia (China, India) and most of the United States; served with veteran missionary David Adeney; worked as postmaster, archaeologist, secretary, door-to-door salesman; taught Greek in Chinese; been fired twice; etc.

But, like St. Augustine (though I am by no means comparable to him!) I write because I must. "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from trouble" (Psalm 107:2). God has saved me from manifold difficulties and dangers. He deserves public recognition for his mercy to me.

How could a round-shouldered, near-sighted, bookworm encounter any danger?

Read on and you will see: Near death at birth; one close call in a seaplane over the mountains of Taiwan, another in a land-based aircraft flying low over the Pacific Ocean; almost bitten by a deadly cobra; nearly caught playing a practical joke in my home on Richard Nixon; threatened with death by a high-school classmate; attacked by a drunken, knife-wielding Dutchman in the middle of the English Channel; careening down a mountain on the Navaho Reservation in a jeep

with no brakes. As a result, you may find the following pages slightly entertaining.

My principal goal, however, is to demonstrate how God has been working in my life. Over the years, he has gradually, often painfully, been showing me my sin and his grace and making me into a less ineffective missionary to the Chinese.

The story includes dealing with a well-known father of whose love I was never sure until recently. My attempts to gain his approval may find echoes in your heart.

The greatest struggle, however, has issued from my desire to please my heavenly Father. Again, you may trace the footsteps of your own pilgrimage as you read about mine.

God is still at work; the story's not over yet.

I thought of many different titles for this book. One was "Still Growing Up," since I am aware that I have a long way to go before I am a mature Christian. "Little Wright" came to my mind, since that is what our pastor here calls me, and that is what I am – a little guy who stumbles through life doing one stupid or even sinful deed after another. But that title contains my name and seems too coy.

"The Greatest Thing" was my first choice, since it expressed my desire to emphasize the truth that the greatest blessing in life is to know God. I rejected it because it might give the impression that I think I have already attainted the full enjoyment of this greatest of all blessings, when in fact I have not.

I would have chosen "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," because I daily sense the truth of Paul's words, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells" (Romans 7:18). John Bunyan had already used that title for his own spiritual autobiography, however.

Dear Reader, I now know why St. Augustine spent the last weeks of his life mourning for his sins. He saw clearly the awful guilt that sent the Son of God to the cross for his forgiveness.

Then one day I was listening to a tape by John G. Elliott in the car, and I heard a song with the words, "It's been mercy all the way." I knew at once that was the correct name for this account of my life so far: *Mercy All The Way*.

God's mercy has preserved me from many dangers to my physical life. His mercy has kept Him from punishing my sins as they deserve. His mercy has used my foolish mistakes and even my wicked rebellion to produce good out of evil.

More than that, God in His infinite skill has woven together the disparate threads of my life into a tapestry with an intricate and beautiful design. Not only has He employed all the strands of my childhood and youth to prepare me to be a missionary, but He has also transformed my errors and redeemed my sins to fashion me for this purpose.

I want others to know that we serve a faithful, powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He is causing all things to work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. We don't have to worry about anything, but can cast all our cares on him, knowing that he cares for us. He does answer prayer! He will win the victory in our life: We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

May all those who read the following pages gain a clearer view of the marvelous grace and mercy of God!

A number of people helped with the final form of this book. My thanks go to Dr. Peter Doyle, his wife Sally Ann Doyle, my daughter Sarah, Fred Hurd, Joshua Yang, Rich Thurston, Susan Siu, and Iris Lin for reading all or part of the manuscript and making needed corrections and helpful suggestions. Lillian Brubaker proofread most of the manuscript and made numerous changes.

Chapter One: Birth and Background

This baby should have been aborted!

Dr. Sylvester grimly turned to my father and posed a terrible dilemma: "I can save either the baby or your wife. Which shall it be?"

The question didn't surprise my father. My mother was forty years old when she conceived. Things went wrong from the beginning. For one thing, she didn't want another child. My sister Laurie, the youngest of four, had reached seven years of age, old enough to require a bit less trouble. My father (a Naval officer) had been ordered to Washington again, and this time my mother looked forward to having some fun in the capital city.

She had, as it were, "paid her dues" to motherhood. Her first son, named Austin after my father, was injured during the birth process and had cerebral palsy. Afflicted with seizures for the first few years of his life, he suffered also from legal blindness (although he could see a little), spastic movements, and mental retardation. My mother had spent countless hours caring for him while she took care of her next three children. My two other brothers, Peter and Rodger, concocted so many pranks and teased my sister so much that they posed a constant problem, despite my mother's strict discipline.

She knew that my father would soon go off to sea again. He had already survived one tour of combat duty as the commander of a small aircraft carrier, the *Nassau*. With no armor, manned by men with no experience, armed with anti-aircraft guns that jammed, and lacking a water pump, the ship would have become a floating coffin had the Japanese been able to find and hit her. God preserved both the ship and my father, however, even using a miracle once. Here's what happened:

My father had launched all his airplanes in a strike against the Japanese in the Aleutian Islands campaign. Heavy fog had set in soon after their take-off, preventing them from attacking their targets. They returned to the ship, only to discover that the *Nassau* lay buried in a sea of impenetrable fog. They were fast running out of fuel; the frigid waters of the Bering Sea would mean death in three minutes for downed pilots, and they couldn't locate the aircraft carrier.

My father, although not a church-going man, believed in God. He had read Morrison's *Who Moved The Stone* as a young man and was convinced that Jesus rose from the dead. As Captain, he doubled as religious leader of the ship, which had no chaplain. He realized that only divine intervention would save the pilots circling blindly overhead. He knew each one personally and could not bear the thought of losing even one, much less the entire complement. His ship, moreover, would be rendered useless without the planes.

He went on the public announcing system: "Now hear this! This is the Captain speaking."

All hands were aware of the crisis facing the pilots and the ship which served them. What would the Captain have to say at such a moment?

"Our pilots are almost out of fuel. They must land soon or be lost. I want each one of you to pray to God in your own way and ask him to save them. They have not hurt anyone today, so perhaps he will answer our prayer." My father's theology lacked precision, but his instinct was right.

Within a few moments, he witnessed such a miracle that he repeated the story to me often during my childhood. He would say:

"I know there's a God. I've seen a miracle. After I ordered everyone to pray, a corridor suddenly appeared in the fog: A bit wider than the ship, and extending fore and aft far enough to allow landing! The wing commander radioed, 'I see you!' and was ordered to commence landing. When all the planes were safely on deck, I called on the ship's crew to give thanks to God, who had saved our men."

With furious sea battles raging throughout the Pacific, my mother knew that sea duty would mean high risk. She was right. When the Americans invaded Okinawa more than a year after my birth, the Japanese struck back with suicide bombers called Kamikazes. One day my father, who was by then captain of a large aircraft carrier, the *Hornet*, looked out his port (window) and saw five carriers burning. On another occasion, the *Hornet* missed a direct hit by a diving Kamikaze by only six feet. In the end, his ship was the only Essex-class carrier that was not hit by Japanese bombs or kamikazes.

After she learned she was carrying me in her womb, my mother soon struggled not only with morning sickness but also with worse complications. As soon as the family moved from Pensacola, Florida, to Washington, she was ordered to her bed for the rest of her pregnancy.

As if that weren't enough, the college professor whose home they were renting demanded that our family leave immediately as soon as the lease was up. Meanwhile, my father had been ordered to take command of the new *Hornet*, operating in the Pacific against the Japanese (it was 1944). The professor, nevertheless, kept appearing at the door, where he was refused entry by our maid, Mrs. Wash. He tried to sneak in several times, almost always being thwarted. Once he succeeded, only to be confronted by my irate father. Finally, an outraged judge issued a restraining order against the landlord, rebuking him for cruelly harassing the bed-ridden wife of a man about to go off to war, perhaps never to return.

I am convinced that if my mother had become pregnant in the 1990's, she and my father would have considered abortion. Doctors would have argued that she was too old, her health was fragile, and having a fifth child would endanger her both physically and mentally. But they never even considered the abortion option.

Thus, the doctor's question came at the end of a long and stressful nine months for my parents. Now it seemed that all their caution and concern would come to naught. The baby she had carried to the hospital might not leave with her. On the other hand, my father couldn't stand the thought of losing his wife and the mother of their four children. A professional Naval officer, he was used to making tough decisions; this would be the hardest of them all.

Quickly, he replied, "Save the mother." No one questioned the rightness of that awful choice.

In God's providence, however, the experienced physician saved both mother and child, so I was brought into this world on a hot summer day in the middle of World War II. I have often realized with a shudder that if *Roe vs. Wade* (the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion) had come thirty years sooner, I might not have lived.

With all that stress upon her, compounded by the awful heat in Washington in June, my mother was exhausted. No wonder both she and I almost died. It was still touch-and-go for several months, however. The doctor allowed my father to drive my mother back to her home in Pensacola, but only if she lay down in the back seat of the car the entire journey.

My condition was so unstable that my father denied himself the pleasure of holding and loving me; he knew the odds were great that he would never see me again. Mrs. Wash took me to Pensacola on the train. That was my first separation from my mother.

A few days later, off he went to war as the Captain of the *Hornet*. His ship saw constant action and operated west of Pearl Harbor for eighteen months – an incredibly long time away from homeport. My father had to employ all sorts of gimmicks to keep morale high. For example:

One fine day, while the sailors repaired airplanes or played softball on the huge deck, he appeared conspicuously on the bridge, brandishing a .45 automatic pistol. The men sighted their Captain with a gun and soon all eyes were on his actions. As a Naval Academy cadet, my father had distinguished himself as an expert marksman. Later, in the 1930's, he invented a new way of firing a fighter airplane's machine guns so as to down an enemy. He had even demonstrated this method to skeptical British Royal Air Force pilots during the Battle of Britain before the U.S. entered the war. These hardened fighters had fought the mighty German Luftwaffe to a standstill against incredible odds; what could a green American teach them? Then mock dogfights, using cameras instead of guns, showed my father "shooting down" one of their best aces. They adopted his method soon after.

Sailors are always interested in what the "old man" on the bridge is up to. For one thing, they want to stay out of trouble, so they try to escape his watchful eye. This day, however, his eyes were elsewhere. They all turned to observe as he tracked a school of flying fish frolicking in the balmy Pacific. These amazing creatures leap out of the water, use their wing-like fins to "fly" for a few feet, and then plop back down under the waves.

My father took deliberate aim and fired. Hitting any target with a .45 automatic pistol at a range greater than fifty feet was unlikely. Attempting to hit a moving target from sixty feet above the water with such a weapon amounted to sheer folly.

"Bang!" went the pistol. "Plop!" went a flying fish. With a satisfied smile, my father picked up a piece of chalk and made a mark on the bulkhead behind him. The young sailors stood dumbfounded: The "old man" can shoot as well as they say! "Bang!" "Plop!" Another mark.

Several more shots and marks, and my father went back to his quarters, leaving hundreds of men staring in profound admiration, if not worship. Only the experienced petty officers knew that it was all a show, put on to distract them from the tedium of life at sea by a notorious practical joker.

Pranks seemed to flow effortlessly from his fertile imagination. He could spot a gullible person quickly and was swift to take advantage of credulity. For example, in the 1930's he played baseball for his ship. One day he injured his foot sliding into third base. The wife of one of his teammates saw him limping the following day and asked, "What happened to your foot?"

"It's my socks," replied my father. "Jamie (my mother's name) mistakenly put two left socks together; my right foot's killing me."

"'Left' socks?" came the curious reply. "I didn't know socks came in 'left' and 'right'."

"Oh yes, but they're hard to find. They're great when you have them on right, but awful if you don't."

He went off chuckling at the joke he'd played. A few days later, his teammate reproached him, "Artie!" (my father's nickname) "You rascal! My wife's been looking all over town for those socks you talked about!" (You can buy this type of socks now, but you couldn't then.)

His quick reactions never ceased to amaze me. Many years later we were all sitting around in the spacious living room of the house my mother inherited from her father in Pensacola, Florida. That part of the South grows really large roaches, like the ones in Taiwan. Suddenly, my mother screamed, "A roach!" as she pointed to a huge specimen walking across the wall.

"It's a monster!" my sister shrieked.

"Get a broom," someone suggested.

"Get the spray!" came another voice.

"Get the scales," my father quietly added, gently mocking their terror. A man who had fought the Japanese in the Pacific could not get very alarmed over the presence of an insect.

Sometimes his humor expressed an appropriate view of himself, bordering upon humility. Once, when I asked him why the *Hornet* escaped damage while all the other *Essex*-class carriers were hit, he replied: "My gunnery officer was the best in the fleet. Our pilots fought bravely and well to defend the ship. I was a pretty good ship handler. The other ninety-nine per cent was luck." Not being a Christian, he did not know how to ascribe glory to God; being a God-fearer, he knew better than to take credit himself for the safety of his ship.

When Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Josef Stalin, and Chiang Kai-shek assembled in Cairo in 1943, my father was chosen to be a part of the American delegation. His typically self-

effacing comment: "I went along to sharpen pencils for Admiral Bieri."

Cairo was his first encounter with the Chinese leader, and he was impressed. He wrote my mother that Chiang was "the only honorable man in the group." He believed that FDR, although a masterful politician and stirring speaker, had betrayed the country by allowing the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor even though he had advance knowledge of their plan. (Many others held that view, although the evidence remains inconclusive.) He knew that Churchill often lied to the Americans about the Germans' strength in order to persuade us to divert forces to the war against Hitler; meanwhile, our men in the Pacific faced a powerful foe with inadequate resources. Stalin's mass murders and broken promises marked the Russian as a wicked dictator. Only Chiang seemed to keep his word. My father was quite aware that the Chinese government was corrupt and that Chiang's closest circle contained crooks and swindlers, but he believed that the Generalissimo himself was an honorable man.

This comment reflects his own commitment to strict integrity. He often instructed me, "If it's right, do it; if it's not right, don't." An incident from his earlier career shows how he acted on this principle:

He had been nominated for the prestigious Naval War College, a sure sign that his superiors considered him material for promotion. At that time, however, "black shoe admirals" – non-aviators – controlled the Navy. Unaware of the potential of air power, they set the rules for war games and the paradigms used by the College. One of those stipulated that a direct hit with a powerful bomb on a warship would only slow its speed a few knots (nautical miles per hour). My father knew otherwise. General Billy Mitchell had demonstrated the effectiveness of airborne attacks on warships by sinking an old battleship, but the Navy would not face reality. Rather than go to school under such ridiculous conditions, my father declined the appointment, risking his career but retaining his integrity. World War II, especially the sinking of British capital ships by Japanese planes and later the destruction of the giant Japanese battleship *Yamato* by aircraft from my father's ship, proved the aviators to be right.

My father's influence upon my life cannot be measured. I thank God for him and all that he gave me and taught me.

My mother came from a distinguished family. One of her ancestors sailed from England on the *Mayflower*. When I later studied the history of the Pilgrims, I realized what an honor it was to be descended from Elder William Brewster. He had run a post house – a place where men carrying the mail in England could rest and receive fresh horses. He also managed a rich man's estate. In this spacious home gathered Christians who wished to worship God according to their understanding of the Bible.

At that time, 17th-century England lay in the grip of a government committed to enforcing the rule of the Anglican Church. Henry VIII had led that church out of the Roman Catholic Church; Archbishop Thomas Cranmer had given it the incomparable *Book of Common Prayer*. But later monarchs and archbishops had done much to pervert the work of the earlier reformers of the church and had re-introduced many Roman Catholic practices. In protest, believers in the

authority of the Bible would meet secretly to worship God. William Brewster and his group suffered much persecution. Fleeing England, some of the Pilgrims lived in Holland for a while, then decided to immigrate to the New World. There they could establish a government founded on the Word of God and could worship God according to their conscience.

After a perilous journey, they landed in Massachusetts. William Brewster served as one of the spiritual leaders of the group. I didn't realize all this until much later (very recently, in fact). All I knew was that my mother and her mother belonged to the Mayflower Society. They also were members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, having ancestors who fought in the War for Independence. Other distinguished forebears included George Washington Wright, whom Andrew Jackson appointed to be the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida.

Born in 1904 in Pensacola, Florida, my mother had grown up as the pampered child of a bank president. He had worked his way to the top, but she was given everything. She would have been hopelessly spoiled were it not for the sternness of her father (who was of Scottish descent) and the strictness of her mother. Like other Southern girls, she was taught manners, etiquette, and the liberal arts.

God began to work in her at an early age. Gypsy Smith, one of many travelling evangelists in the early years of the twentieth century, came to Pensacola when my mother was a school girl. Preaching daily in a tent, he soon needed a wooden "tabernacle" to hold all who came to hear. Each day after school, my mother would change into a white dress, walk down Palafox Street one mile to the tabernacle, and join the choir for the revival services. She did not, like some, "get religion" (as they called being converted), but she received Smith's message readily. He reinforced the clear Biblical teaching which she heard in Christ Episcopal Church each Sunday as the *Book of Common Prayer* was read – an ironic way for a descendant of William Brewster to learn about God!

Like others of her generation, my mother was brought up to respect authority and to obey her parents implicitly. It never occurred to her to disagree with them or to flout their authority when she was a young child.

Her father had started working as a clerk in a bank and by dint of faithful labor and skillful service had risen to be president of his own bank. He specialized in helping others to achieve success as he had. He particularly enjoyed lending money to enterprising black men (called Negroes at the time).

Her mother desired the best education for her daughter. She sent her off to a camp in Maine for the summer. Unaccustomed to the cold, my mother shivered the whole time. Then my grandmother sent her to Ely's Court, a "finishing school" for girls in Connecticut. The students were supposed to learn all the polite arts, such as French, entertaining guests, and proper etiquette.

As the only Southerner in the school, my mother faced ridicule for her strange accent and for her habit of saying, "Yes, Ma'am" to her teachers. Little did she know that these years in the North

would prepare her for marriage to my father and for contact with people of different cultures! The girls at the school went into New York regularly to attend performances by such great artists as Rachmaninoff, Paderewski, and Caruso. After "finishing school," she went to what was then the Women's College in Tallahassee, Florida, for her college education.

Returning home after college, she met a dashing young flight instructor at the U.S. Naval Air Station in Pensacola. She had gone out with many flight instructors, but my father seemed to be a cut above the rest. One problem: He came from New York and her parents did not want her to marry a "Yankee." They weren't happy about her becoming a Navy wife, either. To dissuade her from marrying my father, they sent her to Europe on what was then called the "Grand Tour." She knew their intentions, however, and insisted that she be allowed to buy her wedding dress before she left home.

When she returned, still planning upon becoming my father's bride, they took her with them to San Francisco, where her father attended a bankers' convention. After the meeting, they boarded a cruise ship and sailed south, then through the Panama Canal and the Caribbean Sea to Tampa, whence they took the train home. These travels in 1926 also prepared my mother for repeated trips all over the nation and the world in later years.

Finally her parents relented and gave their permission. They had by then begun to appreciate the outstanding qualities of my father, who had been brought up by a Christian mother and an honest Irish father. My paternal grandmother was one of the few women in her generation to attend college. My grandfather had taught himself law and had become so successful that he was the only non-legislator to be given a seat on the floor of the New York Legislature. When he retired, a banquet in his honor was attended by the Mayor of New York City, Fiorello La Guardia, after whom the airport is named.

Mr. Doyle must not have had very distinguished ancestors, otherwise he would certainly have mentioned them. In later years, my father would say, "When the Irish landed in New York, there was a big sign at the wharf saying 'All Irish go this way.' Those who could read followed the sign and founded Doylestown, Pennsylvania; those who could not, remained in New York (referring to his own forebears)."

(Like his father, my own father was an avid storyteller. He could go on and on with one humorous tale after another, almost always poking gentle fun at himself, rarely ridiculing others.)

After marrying my father, my mother followed him from one Naval air station to another. They had little money, especially during the Depression, but she had learned frugality from her mother. She had never had to cook or keep house as a girl, since they had servants to do that. She soon learned all the arts of the homemaker, however, and, though well-educated, happily fulfilled the role of wife and mother.

Their first son, Austin (after my father), suffered brain damage in the birth process. He was afflicted with cerebral palsy from then on, affecting his sight, speech, movements, and intelligence. Had he been thus born in the 1990's, he might have been allowed to die. He suffered

also from convulsions. The doctor entrusted my mother with the medicine necessary to control these, a rare practice in those days. For the next thirty years, she loved and cared for her oldest son without complaint; for this my father was always grateful, and often commended her to us.

Conclusion:

Like my parents, I was born into a comfortable middle-class home. The rich heritage of my ancestors was passed on to me as I grew up. Like them also, however, I was taught that success comes from hard work, that privilege brings responsibility, and that strict integrity must characterize all we do. As I reflect upon their lives, I see how the virtues of one generation (like William Brewster and my father's mother) can bring blessing to people many years later. God preserved the lives of my ancestors and even of my own parents, for His own glory, but also – I believe – partly to ensure that I would come into this world to serve Him. Looking back on my precarious entrance into life, I realize that it was God "who took me out of my mother's womb" and who has upheld me from birth.[1]

[1] Psalm 71:6

Chapter Two: Early Years 1944-1957

While my father was off at war, my mother ran the household. She had help from two of her sons, her daughter, and several part-time servants. She had grown up with household servants and had had the help of at least one almost all her married life, as did most other officers' wives in those days.

As my health improved, so did our relationship. In fact, the baby my mother did not want to have became her favorite – or at least that's what my siblings thought.

My father returned home from the war eager to see me. He had left me thinking I would die at any time. My mother's letters told of my healthy development while he was away, which made him happy. So, when he came home, he was very excited. You should know that he was a big man with a loud voice and exuberant expressions. Almost as soon as he came in the door – after he had kissed my mother – he picked me up with much joyful shouting and threw me up into the air. To his profound shock and disappointment, I screamed in terror. I had no idea who he was or what he was doing with me. For some time afterwards I would cringe from him in fear. Deeply disappointed, he withdrew his emotions from me from that time onwards. Thus, our relationship started out poorly.

I don't remember much until the age of two, when my parents went off to Bermuda for a short vacation. I recall my mother leaving me in the driveway. Another time, she left me with friends for a while. She says I was happy, however.

1949-52

Bermuda

My first real memories come from our two-year stay in Bermuda, where my father commanded the Naval Operating Base that Britain had given to America as part of the deal whereby she got 50 destroyers to help fight Nazi U-boats before the U.S. entered World War II.

We lived in a beautiful house on the water, with a dock to which was moored a large, the use of which we enjoyed at any time. We had several steward's mates, all Filipinos. One of them (Andy) became so irritated with me for getting under foot that he threatened to put me in the oven (which he pronounced "oh-ven"). Terrified, I ran to my mother for comfort, but she merely exhorted me to obey him and be good. She was not about to let me become a spoiled brat.

That was what my father and brother Rodger feared. A portrait made of me at that time shows me with very blond hair. My father and Rodger would deride me and call me "Golden Boy." My mother had apparently grown to love me and delight in me so much that they thought I was spoiled. They would call me a sissy because I was not tough enough. In an attempt to change my character, they changed my name from Wright to "Butch" – a name given to rough boys. As I remained anything but rough and tough, that name became "Butchie" until at the age of eight I decided I wanted to be called Wright (my middle name, also used by my uncle).

Daddy and brother Rodger also tried various ways of toughening me. My father taught me how to ride a bicycle by having me get on and ride until I fell off, then try again and again until I mastered the skill. As I grew up, he had me do "stoopfalls" – what we now call pushups – to strengthen my arms. He encouraged me to try various sports like baseball and football. Unfortunately, my athletic skills fell far short of his (he had been a champion in baseball, football, and boxing, and in his fifties played a powerful game of tennis and very good golf). I sensed his disappointment with me very early in life.

Looking back, I think God was trying to use my father to overcome my natural weakness in order to make me stronger. "The glory of young men is their strength."[2] My heavenly Father was also using my own father to discourage me from identifying too much with my mother, who was tempted to favor me because I was her last child and had almost died at birth. As a sinner, I did not always receive my father's admonitions and discipline as I should have; God has given me other opportunities to learn these lessons later in life.[3]

People outside our home knew my father as an affable and friendly man. At home, he always treated us with the utmost courtesy and fairness, never losing his temper or uttering mean words to us or to my mother. At Christmas and on our birthdays he always presented us with large gifts; during the rest of the year he showed himself to be a generous father, although not indulgent. Perhaps because of these qualities of his, I now find it relatively easy to believe that God is fair, reliable, and generous.

My parents began to school me in independence from an early age. Because of my father's rank, we lived some distance from other Navy families with children. Naturally, I wanted to play with other children, so my mother would put me on the bus that went by my friends' house and I would ride there alone, at the age of four. Then my playmates' mother would lead me to the stop where I caught the return bus. That was in the days when a child riding alone in Bermuda need not fear any danger.

Sometimes I would wake up in the middle of the night. My mother thinks it was the shadow of the headlights of the Marine guard Jeep that flashed across the wall near my bed that woke me up. My room was on the second floor, at the end of a long hallway. I would occasionally get up, clutching my teddy bear tightly, descend the stairs, and make my way to the other end of the house where my parents slept. I would enter their room and wake them up, asking that I be allowed to sleep with them. Wisely, my mother would comfort me and then lead me back to my own bed. She wanted me to learn to overcome fear, which I eventually did.

In Bermuda I began my lifelong delight in big storms. Several devastating hurricanes passed over the island, downing huge trees and causing immense damage. Once my sister and I ventured out of the boarded-up house while the eye of the hurricane passed over; I can still feel the thrill of skirting with danger.

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[2] Proverbs 20:29
[3] Hebrews 12:5-11

Illinois and Florida

When I was six, we moved to Glenview, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. My father took command of the Naval Air Reserve Command, with a mission to keep a sufficient number of Naval Reserve aviators ready for instant action should a war demand their service. Because of his excellent performance, the U.S. Navy was able to deploy enough pilots to defend our forces in the first weeks of the Korean War and then throughout that long conflict.

Unfortunately for me, my body could not stand the harsh Illinois winters; I got bronchial pneumonia and had to be taken by my mother to her home in Pensacola, Florida for several months. Thus, except for a brief time, I spent almost my entire childhood below "the Mason-Dixon Line" (the imaginary "line" drawn in the 19th century to demarcate North and South in the United States). As a consequence, I became accustomed to a hot, humid climate. As we shall see, that tolerance served me well in years to come. The downside of this separation was lack of association with my father for several months a year.

My father's next assignment was commander of a Carrier Division in the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. His flagship was the *Midway***,** at that time the largest carrier in the U.S. fleet. He was gone for a year, during which I lived with my mother and sister Laurie in Pensacola. Encouraged by my mother, I walked the one mile to school by myself every day. When my father returned, he brought all sorts of presents from European countries. I especially remember the leather goods from Italy. Sadly, a model sailboat which he had bought had directions for assembly written in Spanish, so it lay in its box for years. He had meant well, though.

1952-54: Puerto Rico

After that we moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where my father was Commander of the Caribbean Sea Frontier and the Tenth Naval District. Once again, we lived in a beautiful house on the water. As in Bermuda and Glenview, we had several Filipino steward's mates to do the housework, including Francisco, a diminutive man with intense energy and a phenomenal memory. The first morning in Puerto Rico, he came into my room and asked what I wanted for breakfast. "French toast," I replied immediately, craving something sweet. He obliged and served me what I wanted. When my mother found out, she was upset with him; she wanted me to have eggs! From then on, he knew that I could have sweets only occasionally.

I soon joined the Cub Scouts. We wore uniforms to meetings. Shoes had to be shiny. I didn't know how to shine my own shoes, so I got one of the stewards to do that task for me, until my mother discovered what I was doing. She then had the Filipino teach me how to shine my own shoes – a chore which I have performed with satisfaction ever since then. As you can see, my mother faced a constant struggle in order to have me grow up normally, rather than as a spoiled son of an admiral. She worked hard to teach me the values of independence and hard work. I realize now that my own tendencies toward laziness would have developed even further had she not been so vigilant.

My propensity to sin showed up early in life.[4] One day, when I was about nine years old, I agreed to a scheme hatched by two friends of mine: We would break into the toy store on the Naval Base. Christmas was coming, and only adults could enter this store, so that all Christmas presents would come as a complete surprise to their children (another reason may have been to avoid the trouble of having children ask for and not receive things they had seen).

One of my partners in crime was small and wiry, so we lifted him up to a window high above the ground; he broke in through that and then opened the back door to us. As we roamed through the dark warehouse, packed with countless toys appealing to children of all ages, my conscience began to trouble me. I thought that perhaps if I stole only something small, my guilt would be less than if I chose a large toy. Accordingly, I took a package of three darts and put it into my pocket.

I didn't rest well that night. The next day, however, I was foolish enough to visit one of the two boys with whom I had committed the theft. Early in the afternoon, to my horror, my father's Navy car drove up. With a grim face he ordered me to get in. He said nothing all the way home until we had almost arrived. Then he asked one question that penetrated my inmost being: "Was it because your mother and I do not give you enough for Christmas that you thought you had to steal?" He spoke from a wounded heart, for he had always given us children the biggest presents at Christmas. Those words have come back to me countless times since I trusted in Christ; they remind us that any sin of ours reveals a lack of faith in God as Father and a lack of gratitude towards Him.

He led me upstairs and administered a spanking on my posterior as rare as it was memorable. He began with his hand, but when he saw that the pain was insufficient to make me cry he used his leather belt. I have not been guilty of shoplifting since then.

While we were in San Juan, I began to realize that my father was important. We often had movie parties in our home; my father would have the Special Services people bring a popular movie and invite a few friends to watch it with us. When we went to the theater on the base, our family sat in the balcony, in the seats reserved for us and for the Governor of Puerto Rico, whom we entertained in our home several times and visited him in his mansion also. We sometimes held parties on the terrace behind our house; as the moonlight played upon the lagoon, a Navy band would play swing music for the dancing guests.

Since my parents paid little attention to his rank, I was surprised when a classmate taunted me, saying, "You think you're so smart just because you're the Admiral's son." In the first place, I didn't think I was smart. In the second, it never occurred to me that being the Admiral's son conferred any special status on me. My parents were always careful to remind me that I would be evaluated on the basis of my performance, not my father's.

I did begin to acquire a sense of obligation to my father's reputation, however. Once our family and some friends took a boat trip to the other end of Puerto Rico, about one hundred miles away. As the forty-foot picket boat pitched and rolled in the Caribbean Sea, several people, including

[4] Proverbs 22:15

my sister Laurie, began to be seasick. I asked my father what to do: "Keep your face into the wind; don't look at the water near you – focus on the distant horizon." I followed his advice and did not get sick.

God has taken special care of me over the years since my nearly fatal experience at birth. For example, one day a friend and I were walking around the old Spanish fort, El Moro, on the Army installation. Without realizing the danger, we wandered onto the golf course that ran alongside the massive fort. Suddenly I cried out in pain as something hard struck my foot. It was a golf ball, hit by a golfer a long distance from us. It occurred to me later that a difference of one second in my walking or his hitting could have meant that the ball would have hit my head.

While in Puerto Rico, I learned to shoot. My father was an excellent marksman and loved to hunt. He bought me a BB gun and taught me how to use it, beginning several years of very happy entertainment for me. Since I seemed to have inherited his ability with a weapon, I did well; this brought his praise and approval, which I naturally craved. I did not succeed in baseball, my father's favorite sport, however. He had signed me up for Little League. Once he even practiced with me as I used the glove he had given me for my birthday. Unfortunately, my baseball career came to a speedy end on the day the pitcher threw a ball that hit me in the face. I just couldn't keep my eyes on the ball. Nor did I ever develop an interest in fishing, another of my father's pastimes. He tried several times to teach me the necessary skills, but I didn't like the long periods of waiting or the messiness of cleaning the catch. I thus missed out on many hours of companionship with my father in later years.

I did a little better with chess. My father played postal chess: He had a cardboard book with flat chess pieces inserted into slots and kept about a dozen games of chess going simultaneously with people all over the world. In fact, he was nationally-ranked as a chess player. He often amused himself by reading chess books, studying the great games of the masters. He also taught me how to play. One of the happiest moments of my early life came when I beat him in a chess game. Later I wondered whether he had let me win.

When spinning tops became popular, I utterly failed to master that skill. With marbles it was different. I became so good that I soon had cleaned out the entire marble supply of all the kids in our neighborhood. That was foolish, since they no longer had any marbles to risk in playing with me. I should've insisted that we change the rules so that you could take all your marbles home with you at the end of the day. Perhaps my parents should have suggested this solution to an embarrassing situation.

Although I got good grades in school, I do remember one conspicuous failure: I couldn't write poetry. I won't inflict upon an already patient reader my first – and only – attempt at composing anything that made sense in rhyme. Interestingly, however, I can recite that disastrous attempt in my own mind even now.

1954-57 Pensacola: Formative Years

From Puerto Rico we moved to Pensacola, Florida, where my father assumed command of the Naval Air Training Command, a position he had wanted for most of his career. He had fifty-two Naval Air stations under his supervision, with a budget of several hundred million dollars. He appeared before Congressional committees annually to explain his need for appropriations and thus became friends with a number of powerful members of Congress. In order to promote the interests of the Navy among leaders in America, my father initiated what he called "VIP cruises." Leaders from government, education, and industry would be invited to Pensacola for a tour of the training program and a cruise aboard the training aircraft carrier. They could see for themselves the immense difficulty of taking off and landing from a carrier. Meanwhile, they would be given lectures on the strategic role of sea power in world affairs.

Our house, consequently, was filled with important people. Since foreign nations also sent men to Pensacola for training, my parents entertained such dignitaries as the First Sea Lord of England and the Air Vice Marshall of the Royal Air Force. I remember vividly that when the latter came and was introduced to my mother, he extended his left hand; his right arm was missing, the casualty of war. Admiral Halsey, my father's immediate superior in World War II and one of only a few five-star admirals in the Navy, visited us once. The first time I heard my father say "Sir" to anyone was when Admiral Halsey came. But two other guests made a deeper impression upon me.

One was the film star John Wayne. He and the famous director John Ford had come to make a film about a famous Naval Aviator. The actors and film crew stayed with us for several weeks. John Wayne, John Ford, Maureen O'Hara, and others came almost every night after dinner to play poker, one of my father's favorite card games. I remember looking at the cards one afternoon before they came: since John Ford had bad eyesight, the playing cards had very large markings on them. We all liked John Wayne; he was easy to talk with, possessed a fine sense of humor, and did not have a proud or arrogant demeanor. His friends called him "Duke," so that's how my father addressed him. Only much later in life did I understand that fame and fortune mean nothing unless a man knows God.[5]

Another guest stayed a shorter time but also impressed me: Vice President Richard M. Nixon, who came to Pensacola for the wedding of his younger brother, who was a Naval Aviation Cadet in training. Like other VIP's, he stayed in Building 34, the guesthouse across from our house, Quarters "A". He ate with us several times. One afternoon, he was to come to have a drink with my father. Before he arrived, Daddy convinced me to play a trick on the Vice President: I would put on a recording of Beethoven's "Apassionata" piano sonata, performed by Artur Rubenstein. Then I would sit at the piano and pretend to be playing. Since I had listened to this record countless times, I had "memorized" it, after a fashion. I had taken piano lessons for two years, so I was able to place my hands in more or less the right places on the keyboard.

When Mr. Nixon arrived, we chatted for a few moments, then my father said, "Wright, you need to practice now." I went in and put our scheme into action. According to my father, this is what happened next: Mr. Nixon, who played the piano himself, began to notice the music. After a while, he said, "Say, he's pretty good." My father replied, "He doesn't practice enough." Then

[5] Psalm 49:6-20; 52:7

the Vice President, who was really impressed with "my" playing, got up and began to look in through the door opening from the porch into the parlor where the piano was. He was far enough away (remember, this house was really large) that he couldn't perceive my deception, but when he began to step through the door, my father quickly said, "Don't go in! He's quite shy and gets nervous when others watch him." His words saved us from being caught in our naughty practical joke on the Vice President of the United States of America.

That evening, we had a buffet dinner party for the Vice President, his mother, his aunt, and other friends. When Mr. Nixon arrived with his entourage, my mother realized that she had not counted on the six Secret Service agents who would accompany him. While my father and Mr. Nixon were deep in an animated conversation, these burly men kept going back to the table for more. My mother finally approached them and said, "Artie (his nickname), if you and Mr. Nixon don't go get something to eat, there might not be any left for you." They heeded her advice, and a social disaster was avoided.

We lived in luxury for three years. The house itself, built in 1837, had three full stories plus a basement, where four of the six steward's mates lived. In addition, a kitchen extended from the back of the house and was joined by a walkway to a laundry room and a two-car garage. The grounds were kept by a team of gardeners who also tended the plants and flowers of our neighbors, who lived in slightly smaller homes. The street in front of the house was divided by a row of trees. Across the street were tennis courts and the two-story guesthouse. The fourteen-foot ceilings created a sense of spaciousness, as did the divided doors leading onto the screened porch which ran around three-and-a-half sides of the house. We ate on the porch in the summers; the rest of the year meals were served in the large formal dining room. A wide central hall separated the dining room and a parlor on the east side from a large living room, sitting room, and sun room on the west side. Four bedrooms upstairs provided plenty of sleeping quarters for my parents, my sister, and me. The third floor had four more bedrooms, two of which I used as my playrooms. A small attic and "widow's walk" topped the house.

A driver picked up my father in the mornings and took him to work. When he paid inspection tours to the other air stations, he rode in a four-engine plane reserved exclusively for his use. If he wanted to take friends or VIP's fishing, a forty-foot picket boat lay waiting at the dock, complete with crew.

You might think that with all this material comfort, we would have been happy, but we were not. In fact, I remember these three years as among the unhappiest of my life.

What did we lack? Jesus Christ. We did not go to church very often, although my mother sometimes took me into town to the church of her childhood and sometimes to Sunday school on the Naval Air Station. But our life as a family was lived mostly without reference to God, although both my parents believed in Him and tried not to offend Him. They did not seem to know Him personally, however. Thus, we were not strengthened by the fellowship of Christians. Without going into detail, let me merely assure you that the contrast between material comfort and emotional pain was stark. From then on, I have known that no amount of possessions, position, or power can satisfy the human heart; only the love of God can fill the empty void. As

Jesus said, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."[6]

God did begin working in me then, however. In Sunday school, I learned John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."). Later, when I was twelve, my mother required me to go to confirmation classes at her church.[7] Accordingly, I took the bus from the Naval Air Station down to the center of Pensacola each Sunday afternoon for several months. There, under the tutelage of a godly woman, I learned the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, Apostle's Creed, and the rites and rituals of the Episcopal Church. I began to love the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer*. At the time I did not know just how full of biblical quotations that book is, but the words began to exercise power in my life. From then on, I believed in God, though I did not know Him.

My moment of confirmation shall forever remain in my memory; the Bishop stood over me, placed his hands upon me, and called down upon me God's blessing. Whether that Bishop knew God, only God himself knows, but he answered that prayer. Like the other young people receiving confirmation, I was given a combined Prayer Book and Hymnal. Well-used and worn, it lies on my desk to this day. I owe almost all of my early knowledge of God's Word to this remarkable book, whose words were read or sung in the church services I attended regularly from that time on. Nevertheless, I was not yet born again, for God's Spirit had not yet willed to give me new life.[8] I had to wait many years before my faith in God became the kind of faith that saves.

God took care of me during these years as well. One time a friend and I went camping. We took a small boat, which belonged to my father, and started down the Intra-Coastal Waterway just as a thunderstorm arose. We could have been struck by lightning out in the water or swamped by the large waves which beat against the boat, but we made it safely to an island, where we pitched our tent for the night.

On another occasion, God's protection of me showed even more clearly. My father had given me a good bicycle for Christmas. As a result of a collision with a parked car, the front fender on the bike came loose and dangled over the tire. Because of my own laziness, I failed to fix that fender. One day, while riding with a friend, I boasted, "Let me show you some speed." My speedometer was reading 35 miles per hour when suddenly I was flying headlong through the air. When I awoke, I was in the hospital. The fender had suddenly fallen down over the front tire, immediately stopping that wheel and causing me to be thrown high into the air. In fact, I was catapulted so far up that a friend who was having his car filled on the other side of a nearby gas station saw me over the roof of the station and rushed to my assistance. Though I had landed on my face, my only injuries were three broken teeth and a slight concussion. If I had landed on my forehead instead of my face, I would probably have been killed. Looking back, I see this as a

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[6] Luke 12:15

[7] In the Episcopal Church, as in some other Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, infants are baptized. When they come to the "age of discretion," usually around twelve, they are further instructed in the faith and are then confirmed by a bishop. For many young people this is only a ritual and does not, as the Prayer Book says, result in their receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[8] John 1:12-13; 3:3-8

classic example of the truth that "Pride comes before a fall."[9]

One reason happiness evaded me was that my relationship with my father remained distant. He often traveled away to inspect one of the fifty-two stations under his command. When he was at home, guests came over several times a week. I treasured the hours he spent at home with no one else around. Like him, I loved to read; our library contained dozens of fascinating books on all sorts of subjects. I pored through these with fascination, reading poetry, novels, and history. My father gave me the textbook on naval history used at the Naval Academy – a book with more than 1200 pages – and I read it twice. I would ask him questions about famous naval battles throughout history, and he inevitably knew most of the important details. He constantly read and re-read *Lee's Lieutenants*, Freeman's classic history of the Army of Northern Virginia in the Civil War. Once I asked my father what the last battle of the Civil War was. He replied, "I don't know that, but the last real battle between Lee and Grant was at Saylor's Creek." You won't find that in most history books, but I verified it by searching the index of *Lee's Lieutenants*.

Why do I say our relationship was distant, then? Because it seemed to me that he didn't really want to spend a lot of time talking with me. Now that I am a father, I understand what was going on, I think. He would come home from work very tired. Perhaps some guests would be coming over for dinner that night. All he wanted was a few minutes of solitude, so he turned to his beloved books about military history. He didn't realize how much his youngest son wanted a father's attention and approval. I remember almost everything he ever said to me; I only wish he had said more. In my own dealings with our daughter Sarah, I have tried to learn from my father's mistake. Others have occasionally criticized me for spending so much time with her, but I still don't think I have always met her needs for attention.

My father was an outstanding athlete. As a boy, he had played on the high school soccer team that won the championship for New York City. Later, he played baseball at the Naval Academy; he was so good that they invited him back as coach about ten years after he graduated. He played football, baseball, and soccer; he also excelled in boxing and (as I have said) riflery. When I knew him, he spent most of his time playing tennis or golf. At the age of sixty, he and his fifty-eight-year-old partner won the doubles championship for the U.S. Naval Air Station in Pensacola.

Why tell you this? Because, despite tennis and golf lessons, I never learned these sports. I grew very fast – almost twelve inches! – in the three years we lived there. Perhaps that is why I was so uncoordinated. I couldn't do a lay-up in basketball; I was too light for football. I had not yet discovered track. Thus, I had little in common with the boys in our neighborhood. Sometimes, I took refuge in my third-floor solitary games. At other times, I would ride my bicycle with another non-athletic friend all over the base.

In an attempt to make me more well-rounded, my parents sent me to the same summer camp which my brother Rodger had attended as a boy, Lookout Mountain Camp. Now he was a counselor there. I did nothing well except riflery and swimming. Being small, I was easy prey for bullies. My friend Barney Barrett once had to rescue me from several of them in our cabin. I

[9] Proverbs 16:18

shamed my brother Rodger greatly when I lost a tennis match to Myron Rosenthal, also from Pensacola: he had been rated worst player in the entire camp!

My failures as an athlete made it hard for my father to relate to me. He had tried and failed to make me like himself. My own laziness and fear probably contributed to my ineptness, but the major cause was surely my rapid growth and resulting lack of coordination during those critical years. Much of my life since then has been spent in trying to overcome the image of one who is physically inept.

I did excel in piano, however. God had given me large hands and a wide reach, plus unusual manual dexterity. My love for classical music reinforced what my teacher imparted, so I progressed rapidly. My recital at the end of two years of taking lessons featured a very difficult piece by Schumann. That pleased my mother but did not greatly impress my father.

As a result, I played by myself a lot, mostly on the third floor, of which I had free use. In one room I used to lay out toy soldiers and build toy forts. My father had bought me sets of lead soldiers, with beautifully painted uniforms representing armies of different nations at different periods. With these, I would play out the scenes I had read in history books, imagining great battles, and making boy noises to simulate the gunshots and explosions.

When I read, I would listen to classical music. My parents had bought a new high fidelity record player and many fine classical music recordings to go with it. Picking out a thick volume from the shelves, I would settle into a chair and fill my ears and my mind with beauty and bravery. Perhaps that is one source of my persistent idealism, love for classical music, and interest in world history.

Not only did my relationship with my father fail to develop as I hoped, but my mother began to distance herself from me. Afflicted with poor health at the time, she had her troubles, too. Perhaps that made her less patient than before. I have learned since that mothers of teenage boys naturally pull away from them as the boys grow up, but I didn't know that at the time. She would scold me for turning up the classical music too loud and for lounging around with poor posture, reading. She wanted me outside playing with the other kids more. She also feared that my habit of reading with insufficient light, poor posture, and the book held too close to my eyes would bring on nearsightedness. She turned out to be right. I should have heeded her warnings.

One family custom which I treasured was the evening meal. We always ate together, promptly at seven o'clock. By the standards of most people, this was a formal dinner: Servants set the table with silver and china and served us, course by course. Conversation during dinner almost always turned upon current events, including national politics and international affairs.

At this time, I developed habits which have cast a shadow over my life since then. One was laziness. As I have said, I would sit for hours in a comfortable chair, reading and listening to classical music. Although the books and music were good for me, the prolonged sitting and reading were not. Despite my mother's constant reminders to sit up straighter, I continued to slump. I remain round-shouldered to this day; low-back pain, another consequence of bad

posture, has plagued me for many years. My father tried various methods to develop athletic skills in me, to no avail, as I have said. By not trying harder, I failed to develop abilities that would have enabled me to fit in with other males.

Like others my age, I began to nourish a passion for popular music. By selling magazine subscriptions, serving as a caddy at the golf club, and bagging groceries at the Navy Exchange commissary, I earned enough money to buy a portable radio, to which I listened for hours, especially during the summer months. I soon knew all the "Top 40" songs. My weekly schedule included a television program that highlighted the top ten popular hits. Thus, my mind filled up with vanity and foolishness, while I could have been learning great poems and Bible verses. To this day, words and tunes from these songs will suddenly pop into my head and issue from my lips when something reminds me of them – what a waste! When a young man should have been hiding God's word in his heart, I was filling my mind with vanity.[10]

Another addiction soon took hold of me: watching movies. At least once a week, I would go to the base theater to a movie. That would increase to two and even three times a week in later years. Images from those films molded my impressionable mind with ideas of manhood, many of them false. If I had saved the money I spent on movies and used the time otherwise, I would have profited much more. I wish I had known and followed David's decision: "I will set nothing wicked [worthless, vain] before my eyes."[11]

My father finally sensed that he had finished his work as Chief of Naval Air Training in early 1957. By that time, however, the most attractive assignments in the Navy had already been given to his classmates and even to some younger than he. Earlier, he had been offered the job of Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the number two position in the Navy, but had turned it down, saying that he still had work to do in Pensacola. As a result, he had to accept the position of Commander, Taiwan Defense Command. Was God over-ruling in his career so that I could live in Taiwan?

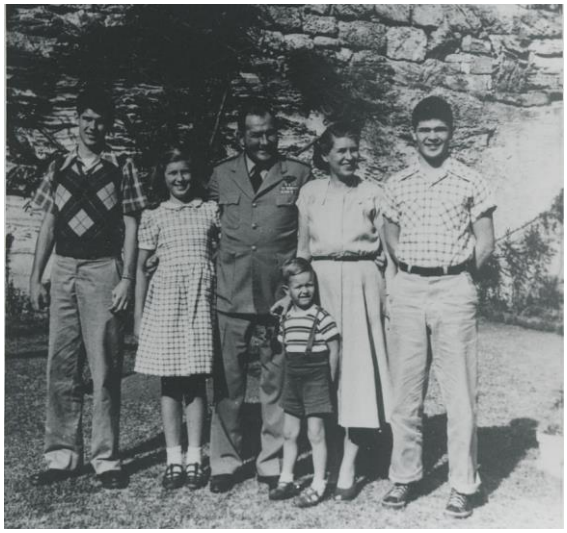
The change of command ceremony thrilled my heart. Hundreds of Naval Aviation Cadets stood in ranks to hear speeches and then to pass in review before my father and his hand-picked successor, Admiral Goldthwaite. At the final moment, as the band played and the guns boomed their farewell salute, several hundred planes, piloted by instructors from all over the country, flew by in a giant formation spelling "ALOHA" – the Hawaiian word for both "Goodbye" and "Hello." I knew then how much his officers and men loved my father.

[10] Psalm 119:9,11
[11] Psalm 101:3

My mother's home in Pensacola

My father (R) on the *Hornet* in World War II

In Bermuda



With my family in Bermuda

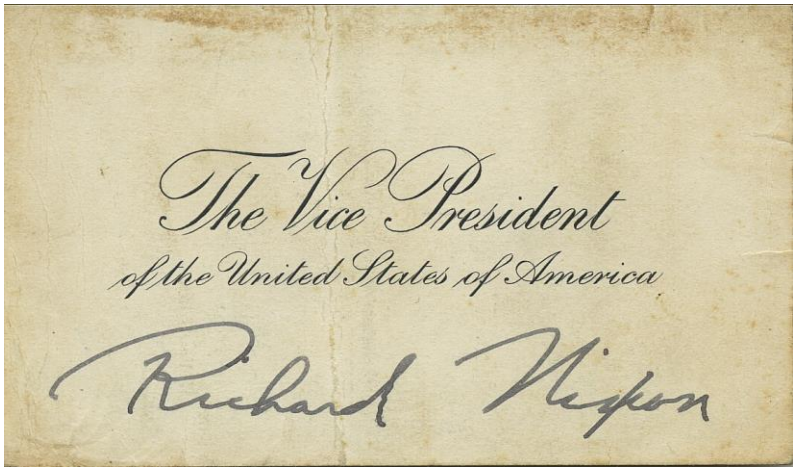
House in Bermuda

Boy Scouts

House on Naval Air Station

Back of house: My bedroom is on the 2nd story on the right

5th Grade



Nixon's Calling Card

Chapter Three: Adventure in Taiwan 1957-58

We packed our new Buick and headed for California. Our trip took us to Washington, D.C., where I saw a chick hatched at the Museum of Natural History; Chicago, where my father took me to see the White Sox play; and then up through Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. I remember eating lunch in a "ghost town" on my birthday, driving through snow in the Rockies, seeing bears and watching "Old Faithful" in Yellowstone National Park, visiting the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, driving across the Great Salt Desert, and playing the slot machines in Reno, Nevada.

In San Francisco we watched a fabulous Fourth of July fireworks display from the mountain-top home of a man who owned a Lincoln Continental, the first I had ever seen. We rode the trolley up and down San Francisco's famous hills, visited the Golden Gate Bridge, and watched a monkey harass an orangutan in the zoo.

We flew across the Pacific in stages. First we stopped in Honolulu so my father could be briefed about his new job. For two weeks, the rest of the family enjoyed the beauties of this tropical paradise. I even learned how to ride a surfboard at Waikiki Beach one day.

After I had acquired this skill, my teacher let me surf by myself. I was riding one particularly big wave towards the beach with great exhilaration, when suddenly I heard screaming behind me. I looked around and saw a massive outrigger canoe, filled with passengers, rushing towards me. I jumped off my board into the water and dived as deep as I could. As I descended, I looked up towards the surface of the water and saw the canoe's outrigger rushing by just over my head. Had I not heard the shouts and jumped in time, the heavy boat would have struck me with deadly force. God had once again spared my life.

The long flight to Taiwan took us through Guam, where we stopped for supper. The Admiral and his wife then drove us to the peak of a mountain, from which we watched the stunning sunset. One moment the sun was a ball of fire hovering on the distant horizon; the next, it was gone, leaving only a brilliant pink sky as evidence of its existence. I was glad to be able to visit the birthplace of our beloved chef Mendiola.

We landed in Taipei on a blistering, hot day. My father received the 15-gun salute and reviewed the elite honor guard of the Republic of China while we stood in the background, basking in his reflected glory. They took us to the guesthouse of the Chinese Navy, the Seven Seas Villa, on the north bank Keelung River in Taipei. Culture shock came at once. When I asked for French toast for breakfast, they didn't know what it was. My request for milk brought a hot glass, something which almost made me nauseous (I have since come to love hot milk!). Everything was different, even the architecture of this modern house. For three years, I had lived in a building constructed in 1837, and wasn't used to shiny wooden floors and concrete walls. I liked Taiwan immediately, nevertheless. I began taking walks around the neighborhood – a pastime I have continued up to the present.

My mother had more trouble. She didn't like the heat or the food. One incident gave her a bad

impression of our Chinese hosts right away: She noticed one day that a necklace which she had left on a table in her bedroom was missing, and mentioned this to my father while they were both alone in the room. A few hours later, after they had been out at a party, they found the necklace back in the place she had left it. Clearly, our room was "bugged" with listening devices, so the Chinese knew what we said. My mother became suspicious from that time on, but my father, an old military man, just took it in stride. He was not surprised or offended; he knew that the Chinese could not trust their American allies, since we had betrayed them many times. He knew also that we were spying on people all the time, too!

Right from the start, he enjoyed working with the Chinese military. He too disliked the Communists, though he believed Mao was a better general than Chiang. His military counterparts respected him, too, for they knew he would always speak the truth to them. They also enjoyed his keen sense of humor and his lack of pretense.

My mother wanted me to get a summer job. Since I had worked as a bag boy[12] at the Navy Commissary in Pensacola, she thought I could do that in Taiwan also. So, the day after we moved into our house on Grass Mountain (Yang Ming Shan), I took the bus down to the Navy Commissary. Along with a dozen other boys, I applied for a job. To my disappointment, I was turned down, so I took the bus back up the mountain. When I came in the door, my mother said, "Why are you home so early?" I told her I had not been given a job. She thought this was ridiculous, so she called my father. He called the man in charge of the commissary; soon after that, I received a call to go down and start work that day, which I did. Clearly, my father had used his influence to get me this job.

Was that wrong? I don't think so, because, as I found out later, no one had been denied a job because I was allowed to work. I did not displace anyone. It seems that the person hiring that day did not hire me simply because he did not know me. He had no assurance I would be a reliable worker. I had experience, however, and was strong enough to do the work, so I made a good bag boy for the rest of the summer. I was glad for the work, the money, and the chance to get to know people right away.

My mother also wanted me to begin going to church. She found out that there was an Episcopal service every Sunday morning, and discovered that the clergyman in charge, Father Morse, needed help with the service. The Episcopal Church often uses young people – then it was all boys, but girls are now allowed to serve as well – in carrying the cross and assisting in the liturgy. I had always wanted to be an acolyte (that is what these people were called), but had not had the opportunity in Pensacola.

Soon I was serving almost every Sunday with Father Morse and another boy about my age. We stood facing each other on either side of the Communion table (we called it the "altar" as Fr. Morse did). My friend, whose name I have forgotten, had the privilege of handling the censer, which he swung at Fr. Morse's direction, filling that part of the church with fragrant incense. He

[12] A bag boy's job was to put groceries into big paper bags, carry them out to the car, and load them for the customers. His pay came in the form of tips from the customers.

also rang the bell at stated times in the Communion service. Fr. Morse preached fairly short sermons, which we all appreciated. I don't remember anything he said, but I did think he was a fine man.

Once a couple of us visited his home, which was not far from our housing area. Hidden in a bamboo grove, the wooden house had been built by Chinese friends. The interior had only a few essential items of furniture, but one piece in particular caught my attention. It was a piano keyboard, so I tried to play it. No sound. Then I realized that he had a keyboard with no soundboard or strings. He "played" the piano for hours in this way, "hearing" the music with his mind's ear. It struck me that he had given up many things, including playing a real piano, in order to serve God among the Chinese. No wonder they loved him!

I didn't have any spiritual insight in those days. In fact, my companion and I would often fight to suppress laughter during the service. He had a perpetual mischievous grin on his face which made me laugh, while Father Morse, oblivious to our silent struggle, intoned the service with his face to the wall as we fought with all our might to keep from bursting into loud guffaws.

My mother did try something else to teach me spiritual truths: One day an American woman visited our house selling books. I liked her immediately, for she exhibited peace and serenity and gentle love. My mother must have appreciated her, too, because she bought a set of colorful Bible story books from her. In coming years, I would learn much from those books.

Having taken piano lessons for two years in Pensacola, I was enrolled again with another teacher, a young American man. He must have been good, because I was soon playing a very difficult piece by Schumann. One stimulus to playing was the companionship of the daughter of an Air Force general, who lived across the street. The Chinese often invited her to keep me company when they gave formal dinners for my father. I liked her, although we never developed any kind of close relationship. Sadly, she decided to stop taking piano lessons. Foolishly, I did the same, despite my mother's advice to the contrary. God had given me considerable talent, apparently. Teenage folly prevented me from developing a skill that would have provided myself and others with pleasure for years to come. I now wish my parents had just commanded me to continue learning the piano, but I realize they would have had to overcome my inherent laziness.

My father was Commander, Taiwan Defense Command. At first that meant that he only commanded a headquarters unit. In the event of war, he would take charge of the Seventh Fleet, all American forces on Taiwan, and all the Republic of China military – a major responsibility. In peacetime, however, he found little to do. Being a strategist and organizer, he immediately realized that something was wrong with the structure of the American military in Taiwan: In addition to the Taiwan Defense Command, there was also the large M.A.A.G. (Military Assistance Advisory Group) force, composed mostly of Army and Air Force officers and their supporting enlisted personnel. Distinctly separate was the Thirteenth Air Force and the C.I.A. unit. My father quickly set out to combine all these disparate units into one, under the jurisdiction of the Commander of TDC. He wasn't trying to increase his own power – he would be gone within two years – but to prepare for combat. If a crisis arose (as it did less than a year later) the American forces in Taiwan would have to work together, and he wanted to make that possible.

The Army and Air Force generals in charge of MAAG and the Thirteenth Air Force, however, jealous of their "territory," opposed him at every step. Their wives also tended to see my mother as an enemy of sorts, which resulted in her feeling lonely while she was in Taiwan. Hardly any of the other wives invited her anywhere or offered to help her adjust. In addition, she discovered that the Army and Air Force were highly hierarchical – rank was all-important. Wives of junior officers did not befriend senior officers' wives. Being used to the "family" atmosphere among Naval aviators, my mother found this type of cold treatment difficult to endure.

She faced other challenges as well. For twenty years, she had been used to entertaining important guests in her home. When she arrived in Taiwan, she discovered that the house was too small for the type of entertaining she had done before. Compounding the problem was the absence of suitable help. The Chinese servants assigned to the house did not understand English and had not been trained in American-style cooking or serving. Our cook Mendiola, who had served my father on the *USS Midway*, in San Juan and in Pensacola, had been "stolen" by Admiral Stump, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, while we were in Honolulu. Since he was senior to my father, we could not get Mendiola back. Francisco, who had been with us for six years, did not cook and was held up for several weeks in San Diego while he awaited transportation. Thus, we neither had proper help for daily living nor the necessary support for treating guests as they deserved.

Several months passed, and Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations – the highest-ranking officer in the Navy – came to visit. As it happened, Admiral Stump was in Taipei also. My mother invited them and several of my father's deputies for dinner. The dining room being too small, everyone had to eat on card tables or on their laps. The Chinese servant – Francisco had not yet arrived – seeing that the guests in the room were all generals or admirals, froze with fright each time he entered the room. My mother had to coax him in with repeated invitations. Thus, the food was served cold and in a disorderly fashion.

Finally, my mother, who knew Admiral Stump on a first-name basis, turned to him and said, "Felix, when are you going to send us Mendiola?" Embarrassed by the question, Admiral Stump mumbled something in reply. Mendiola arrived two weeks later. What my father, despite all his rank, could not accomplish, a woman could.

She was also frustrated by her inability to reciprocate Chinese hospitality. Chinese are justly famous for the way they treat foreign guests, and we were honored with countless formal dinners. Since Chinese tend to entertain guests in restaurants, it probably seemed natural to them to invite us to various government and military clubs for these multi-course feasts. The dinners would be served Chinese-style, one course after another. At first we foolishly ate too much of the first few dishes; it was all so delicious. Gradually, we learned to pace ourselves. Dessert always consisted of ice cream and then fruit. Sometimes Chinese opera would follow. Although we liked the costumes and admired the movements, we could not get used to the music. The Chinese seemed to enjoy these performances immensely, however.

Often, we would be served rice wine. I only sipped a little bit. The Chinese did likewise, except for a few men. When our hosts discovered that my father liked to drink stronger liquor, they

began to test him to see if they could make him drink. The waiters would constantly refill his glass. Then my mother noticed that a different waiter with a different carafe would refill the glasses of the Chinese, and she knew that they were being given something non-alcoholic while the Americans were imbibing strong drink. She alerted my father, who was careful thereafter.

Soon we knew what our hosts were up to. A very large Chinese general challenged him to a drinking contest. "Gan bei!" ("Bottoms up!") came the shout, time after time, as powerful liquor went coursing down their already-well-lubricated throats. In the end, the Chinese had to be led away to a chair, where he collapsed. My father was quite tipsy also. We were not happy with this blatant attempt to make my father lose face, but my father enjoyed the challenge. He made friends easily and didn't take things personally.

On another occasion he was immensely pleased with the Chinese. It was November, and they discovered that his sixtieth birthday was approaching. This being a major birthday for Chinese, they threw a really big party for him. They also told him of the Chinese custom of having children bow (*ketou* – "kowtow") before their parents on this occasion, an idea which, as a father, he naturally found congenial. My sister, who had just been given a close-fitting Chinese dress (*qi pao*), feared lest it would split if she knelt down. I didn't mind the ceremony at all, partly because I heard that we would receive money enclosed in a red envelope (*hung bao*) as a gift from my father. My sister, who was older than I, knelt for her gift without incident, and then I followed. My father thought it all great fun. I did not realize at the time just how much Americans needed to learn from Chinese about filial piety, but he, being a parent, could appreciate their superiority in this area of life.

My father met often with the General Staff, who frequently gave dinners for us and my father's staff. I remember several of them vividly: Gen. Wang Shu-ming, called "Tiger" for some reason. His exuberant personality ensured that the party would be lively. Admiral Liang, round-faced and genial, had a quieter but also very pleasant demeanor. Admiral Ni, tall, dignified, and very friendly, served as the President's military advisor. I believe there was also an Army general named Peng. Gen. J.L. Huang, commander of the Tri-Service (logistics) branch of the military, who spoke excellent English and was assigned as our host for a trip to Sun Moon Lake not long after we arrived.

I'll never forget that excursion. Gen. Huang, his wife, and two daughters accompanied us. Gen. Huang told us the riveting story of Chiang Kai-shek's kidnapping by the "Young Marshall" in Sian (Xian) in the thirties. Chiang wanted to conserve and build his strength for the war that would surely come with Japan, while the "Young Marshall" kidnapped him and pressured him to join forces with the Communists to retrieve Manchuria from Japan immediately. Gen. Huang was with Chiang in Sian, I think. At least he told the story as if he had been right there. On our way through Taichung we passed by the walled compound where the "Young Marshall" was still held under house arrest.

We loved Sun-Moon Lake, where we stayed in a government guesthouse with Japanese-style wooden floors. They expected us to leave our shoes at the entrance to our room and supplied us with slippers, but these were so small we couldn't wear them. The first morning there they served

Chinese-style breakfast, which we weren't used to. I asked for French toast which, to everyone's surprise, they quickly brought me; it was quite tasty. Later that day, we visited a huge dam that was still under construction. We also toured the National Chinese Museum, which at the time was housed in a few very small buildings. We marveled at the ancient paintings, bronzes that have yet to be equaled, and priceless porcelain. My love for Chinese artistic culture (about which I still know very little) traces back to that day.

On the second day, we were joined by Lt. Gen. Chiang Ching-kuo, oldest son of President Chiang. We took to him immediately. He too spoke excellent English. He took us in his jeep on a tour of the Cross-Island Highway, the construction of which he was supervising. Army veterans were laboring hard under adverse conditions to finish this road, which fifty years of Japanese work had failed to complete. I could see why: The gorge on either side of the river rose straight up. Tunnels had to be blasted through solid rock and a highway built somehow on the side of the mountain. All of a sudden our jeep stopped: A huge boulder had just rumbled down the mountainside and blocked the road ahead. If we had been there only a few minutes earlier we would have been crushed under its massive weight.

Gen. Chiang pointed with justifiable pride to the work of his men and explained how important the road would be for central Taiwan: Thousands of square miles of inaccessible mountain forests would be opened up for commerce and human habitation.

We returned to Sun Moon Lake for lunch and then a dance by the aborigines on the small island in the middle of the lake. My father had his picture taken with the aborigine "king" – two men could not have differed more in size or sophistication! Then we boarded a boat which took us out into the lake where a U.S. Navy seaplane awaited us. I had never flown on one of these planes before. My father's pilot, "Chris" Christine, was at the controls. I was surprised at how low in the water the plane rode; my eyes were barely above sea level as I looked out the window. Gen. Chiang sat directly across the aisle from me.

Soon after take-off, he fell into what appeared to be a deep sleep. We had eaten a large lunch, the day was hot, and Chinese in Taiwan often take a siesta after the mid-day meal (a custom which I later adopted myself). As we began to soar over the tall mountains of central Taiwan I examined the forests below to see whether I could find any of the headhunters who were reported still to live there.

Suddenly the engine outside my window stopped. We all looked up, startled. All except Gen. Chiang, that is. Chief Enmire, the plane captain (different from the pilot), came into the cabin to inform my father that the other engine seemed sound. Under normal flying conditions, one engine sufficed to carry the plane and a light load, but we were attempting to fly over the highest mountains in East Asia. The pilot had changed his flight plan: He would navigate the twisting valleys instead, seeking to thread his way through them back to Taipei.

I have forgotten how long that harrowing flight lasted, but the emotions linger. On the one hand, my teenage boy's imagination thrilled at the idea of landing in some impenetrable forest high on a mountain slope where rescuers would take days to find us, by which time we might have been

slain by headhunters. On the other hand, the almost certain death that would result from any crash in these mountains sobered me. My father was contemplating other horrors: The son and probable successor of President Chiang was on board as his guest. If he died in an accident, his blood would be on my father's hands, so to speak, and would cause a huge international incident. My father did not himself fear death, but he did not want to harm relations between the U.S. and the Republic of China; besides, he had already come to like and admire Chiang Ching-kuo.

Other pilots might not have been able to accomplish this feat, but Mr. Christine safely wove his path through the valleys and gorges until the Tamsui Basin appeared. All this time, Chiang's eyes remained closed. Was he really sleeping? Or was he aware that something was wrong, but unwilling to embarrass us by opening his eyes and asking hard questions? We shall never know. It does appear strange that he did not "wake up" until we had landed and taxied to the hangar where various dignitaries awaited us. Had he looked sooner, he would have surely seen that we were using only one engine.

We also spent time with Vice President Chen, a former general. I remember once when we ate dinner at his home, he and my father were discussing the strategic situation. Should war break out with Communist China, my father observed, the U.S. and its allies could quickly take charge in the south, because there was only one railroad supplying that vital area. He was always alert to the logistical element in any military analysis. He never feared going to war with China, as did our political leaders; he knew how weak the communists were then, especially during the so-called Great Leap Forward and the ensuing famine years. He would not, however, conceive of committing American ground forces to such a war. He would let the Nationalist Chinese do their own fighting, while providing air, naval, and logistical support.

Whether the Chinese populace would accept the KMT was a question he never discussed. He knew that corruption in the government had eroded popular support for the KMT and had hastened the communist victory in the civil war. He also knew that American treachery had made the defeat of the Nationalists almost certain. An admirer of General Wedemeyer, who had replaced the irascible Stilwell, he could never forgive the Americans for allowing the Soviet Union to receive the surrender of Japanese troops in Manchuria and transfer all their weaponry and territory to the communists, for forcing Chiang into an unworkable coalition with Mao and then cutting off all our support when the communists had become strong enough for large-scale conventional warfare.[13] I don't know whether he knew that Chiang's generals were often semi-independent warlords whose loyalty could not be trusted, and that they often brutally treated their men and the innocent civilians whom they were supposed to protect.

That brings me to my father's relationship with President Chiang Kai-shek, called "the Gimo" (short for "Generalissimo") in private. He met with Chiang weekly to discuss the military picture. He would never disclose the contents of their conversations, of course, but we could tell that he liked the President very much. He often referred to the successful Northern Expedition, in which Chiang defeated several warlords and united China for the first time in many years. Even though he admired Mao as a greater general, even a military genius, and recommended that I read Mao's

[13]My father had me read *Wedemeyer Reports*, which refutes most of the criticisms of Chiang made by Stilwell, the State Department, and the American media. What a pity that most people don't even know Wedemeyer's name!

works, he believed that Chiang was an honorable man. He repeatedly said, "He has never broken his word to us, as we have to him." Not being a religious man himself, he said nothing of Chiang's Christian faith. I only found out later that Chiang had apparently become a sincere believer in Christ sometime in the latter part of World War II.

My father possessed a fine sense of humor and often told jokes, many of them quite subtle. Although President Chiang never spoke English, my father was convinced that he understood that language. His reason? Chiang usually laughed at his jokes before they were translated by the interpreter.[14]

I also liked President Chiang, even though I only met him four times. He invited all of us to dinner at his house on Yang Ming Shan (Grass Mountain) soon after we arrived. I was surprised to find that he was not tall, though very erect in his military bearing. The warmth and apparent sincerity of his friendliness also won me over. He was constantly saying, "*Hao, hao, hao*," ("Good, good, good") in his thick provincial accent. He treated me with utmost courtesy despite my youth. I did notice that he ate sparingly and later learned that he preferred Japanese food because it contained less oil and fat. He seemed to be in excellent health; his handshake was firm and strong. We spent a delightful evening in their home, the first of several.

I next saw him when he gave a reception for all the foreigners in Taiwan at the Ministry of National Defense (MND) Building (now called the Presidential Palace). We stood for a long time in a receiving line and had only a second to shake his hand and that of Madame Chiang. I suppose that hundreds of guests received the same strong handshake.

Was my father aware that many Taiwanese-born Chinese hated the Nationalist regime? I don't know. He did tell me about the massacre of thousands of Taiwanese that took place not long after the Nationalist army took Taiwan over from the defeated Japanese (the so-called "2-28 Incident"). He was pleased that the Nationalist general responsible for the atrocity had been severely disciplined. Did he know that Taiwan was a police state, where dissent was silenced immediately? Probably. He would not have wanted to live in such a nation himself, but kept telling us that the Communists and Nationalists were still at war. Personal freedoms had been greatly restricted in America during both World Wars also.

He relayed to us the information given him by his Nationalist Chinese hosts. For example, he considered the "land-to-the-tiller" program of land reform a great success and contrasted it with the violent methods used by the communists in their land reform campaigns. Did he know that many Taiwanese landowners felt they had been cheated at the time (although they would later become wealthy from industry)? I don't know. He never said. Clearly, his information was incomplete and his knowledge limited. As a result, he had, perhaps, an overly-rosy picture of the government.

A month after we arrived, I entered the Taipei American School as an eighth-grader. Most of the

[14] His guess that Chiang could also speak English was correct, as we shall see later.

students were children of American military personnel, although a few Chinese attended also. I enjoyed school immensely and did well, as usual. The difference this time, however, lay in my relationships with my classmates. For the first time in my life, I was popular. Perhaps my father's position gained favorable treatment for me (although it did not seem to help my mother). Probably the main reason, however, was that I became a leader among the boys. I loved to walk around the countryside, exploring. I gathered a group of guys who also liked to hike. Once or twice a week, we would come home together from school and then plunge into the jungle or roam the rice paddies, looking for adventure.

One Saturday a whole group of us went on an all-day excursion. At that time, I had a crush on a girl named Mary Ann. Her father worked for the CIA, probably as a U2 pilot. The Number One hit song then was "All day, all night, Mary Ann." Our Mary Ann was a really sweet girl. Anyway, she, and about five of us first crossed the creek near "F" Area, then found and climbed over a ridge to another river. We decided to make our way down this river, jumping from rock to rock, until we reached Tien Mou, where most of the American military lived. I have terrible balance, so I slipped off a rock and fell into the water right away. I slogged along in soggy shoes for the rest of the day.

After a hike of about five miles, we began the return journey to Grass Mountain. We took the path that led from the foot of the ridge up the side of the mountain to the housing area where the CIA people lived. This path was the usual type often seen in China: made of stone, it climbed almost straight up the slope. We were all pretty tired by that time. Mary Ann and I led the way, holding hands. It was the perfect end to a wonderful day.

Suddenly she screamed and jumped. Startled, I jumped too. She looked behind her and my eyes followed her gaze. There, lying coiled on the step below us, was a huge snake, a deadly cobra. Wearing only thin tennis shoes, she had stepped on this snake as it lay sunning itself on the rock. She had apparently awakened it, for the serpent began to hiss in preparation for a strike. We leapt up several more steps until we were safely out of range, then called down to our friends to warn them. Soon several of us boys had killed it with stones and sticks.

What if that cobra had heard us coming and stuck before we noticed it? One bite would have meant certain death. God had taken care of us.

After Mary Ann, I took a liking to another girl, Sandy. Her father was an Air Force colonel. We spent a lot of time together. I would dance with her while we listened to Elvis Presley sing "Don't!" I had been following the top forty hit songs for several years. We were cut off from current music in Taiwan, but my father would bring home 45-rpm records for me from Japan. My possession of them made me popular, such was the state of American teenagers at the time. I developed into a good dancer of the jitterbug. That enabled me to fit right in.

Sandy and I really liked each other, so I was sad when she returned to the States with her family. My "grief" didn't last long, however, for I soon discovered that Diane had her eyes on me. She was a really beautiful girl with long blonde hair and brilliant eyes. She and I danced happily at my birthday party, which we held in our new home on the peak of the mountain (more on that).

She showed her devotion a week before we left Taiwan by throwing a surprise party for me at the Officers' Club. I found out later that her best friend Marsha also liked me. That was a good year for my budding male ego, battered as it had been for three years in Pensacola.

Looking back, however, I lament those involvements with girls at such an early age. I wish my parents had forbidden me to spend time alone with girls and had not encouraged me to attend dances. Young people are just not ready for commitment, and romance without commitment is a waste of time and a temptation to sin. As a father, I did impose such limits upon our daughter until she was seventeen.

Back to my passion for popular music: We went as a family to Hong Kong, for a vacation. At that time, and perhaps still, the premier hotel was the Peninsula. My father always liked to give my mother the best, so we stayed there for a week. I didn't realize at the time what a privilege that was. I did notice the difference between our accommodations and those of the countless refugees from Communist China who lived in squalid huts throughout the Colony. One day we were driven out into the New Territories, which were then covered with rice paddies. We stopped not far from the border with China and looked through binoculars at the barbed wire fence that tried to imprison people there. That was my first look at China from the Hong Kong side.

One rainy day, I teamed up with an American girl on an excursion to Victoria Island (now called Hong Kong Island). Our goal: To find a certain "hit" recording. We tramped all over the hilly business district looking for that single record. I look back on that quest now as a mammoth waste of time and energy. We also visited the famous Tiger Balm Gardens, which were worth seeing. (I didn't know at the time that Tiger Balm was the brand name for an ointment that was supposed to cure all sorts of ailments.)

My family also traveled to Japan. We rode on a Navy plane and stayed at the Sano Hotel, used mostly by American military personnel visiting Japan. The traffic was absolutely terrifying: Driving on the "wrong" (left) side of the road, honking their horns continuously, and taking risks that made our hair stand on end, the taxi drivers created for us an unforgettable experience. We soon discovered that lower-priced cabs drove the fastest in order to make enough money. Completely rebuilt from the ruins of the war, Tokyo presented the visitor with a marvelous spectacle, especially at night. We went down to the famous Ginza – scene of nightlife – and attended an all-girl revue something like the Rockettes of New York. Three hundred women, some dressed like men, entertained us with a variety show for a couple of hours. The finale featured all of them in a line, kicking their legs high. My mother commented on how much prettier the more slender legs of Chinese were than those of the Japanese. I was dazzled, nonetheless.

My father worked with American and Japanese military personnel during the day while we were there. At night we would go out for dinner. Once we ate Hungarian goulash at "Irene's Hungaria" – pronounced Hung-gahrrria, with a rolled "r"; another time we stuffed ourselves at a famous Japanese Kobe beef restaurant, seated cross-legged on the floor in front of low tables. My favorite spot was a five-story pastry shop, where you could preview the desserts in display cases outside. Inside, a staircase spiraled up to the fifth floor; a mirror covered one wall and made the

place look twice as big. I didn't know at the time that the Chinese in Taiwan would learn from the Japanese to like Western-style pastries.

I was intrigued by the Japanese, whom my father had fought during the war. Their repeated bows to each other in the hotel lobby gave the impression of great courtesy. But my father never liked the Japanese. "You can't trust them," he would say, "unlike the Chinese."

We traveled to Japan twice, I think. Once we saw the new movie, *Around the World in 80 Days*, in a huge theater the likes of which I had never seen. During intermission, the Japanese, who had brought fruits and other snacks with them, generously shared them with us. Another experience was less positive: My mother and I went to see a World War II movie, *Run Silent, Run Deep*, about American submarines fighting against Japan in the Pacific. We noticed quickly that the Japanese audience laughed at the wrong scenes, such as when Americans were killed. But we knew how the movie would end, so we got up and left early, in order not to be around at the conclusion. It was an eerie feeling.

As the year progressed and I got into better shape and became more familiar with the mountain trails in our area, I grew bolder. One day, a friend of mine and I decided to walk to Peitou, six miles away by a winding road. I had often run almost the entire distance, wearing Army boots, with him and another boy. This day we decided we wanted to save time by taking a short cut. Instead of walking along the road as it followed the contour of the mountain, we thought we would go directly across the river gorge and up the side of the mountain facing us. My friend jumped off the road; I followed him. We fell farther than expected – about fifteen feet – but our descent was broken by the banana trees into which we crashed. Picking ourselves up, we started through the banana grove. That was easy. Then we ran into an almost impenetrable jungle, and began to regret our decision to leave the road. With great difficulty we made it to the river and crossed it, although I fell in, as usual.

Once across the river, we looked up at the sheer cliff in front of us. It hadn't appeared so steep from the place where we left the road. Now we wondered just how we were going to make it. He led the way, since he was a good climber. Burdened by wet Army boots, I timidly followed. Rain had loosened the soil covering the cliff, so our attempts to clutch foliage growing there often resulted in a handful of grass and no firm grip. I don't know how we managed to crawl up that cliff, but we finally pulled ourselves over the edge and onto the road, breathing sighs of relief. Only later when we told others did we realize that the territory we had traversed was full of poisonous snakes and insects. The Japanese had collected deadly serpents from all over East Asia for experiments in Taiwan, and then had released them after their defeat, turning the island into a veritable snake-pit. Many types were neuro-toxic – that is, their venom affected the nerves, causing almost instant death. Somehow, we had escaped any harm. God had looked out for us.

At the end of the school year, Taipei American School held an athletic field day. I had practiced for the high jump. Totally lacking in technique but having a great deal of spring, I came in second. The main event, however, was the mile. My father had coached me in quick starts and I had been running up to six miles up and down hills for almost a year, so I had confidence I could win. Several thousand people, Americans and Chinese, gathered in the city's athletic stadium to

watch the track and field events. The mile came last. My father had invited a few of his Chinese friends to sit with him.

When the gun fired, I shot ahead. For the next three laps, I led the pack in a very slow but steady pace. I was not looking for a record, only a win, this being my first race. My father told me later that people in the stands were getting a bit bored by my obvious lead and the lack of speed. As we began the fourth and final lap, everything suddenly changed. A Chinese classmate leapt out of nowhere, sprinted ahead, and was soon almost one hundred yards ahead of the rest of us. The crowd roared with excitement while my father's heart sank with anxiety.

I recovered my senses after a while and realized that I still had plenty of energy left, not having pushed myself at all thus far in the race. I began to lengthen my stride. The crowd got to their feet. The Chinese boy still ran far ahead of me, but I was gaining on him. At the back of the track, with 200 meters to go, I was sprinting and catching up with him. I could hear the cheering from the grandstand. The Chinese boy looked back to see what was happening and didn't like what he saw. He "folded" when I passed him on the turn. At the finish line, I was more than fifty yards ahead of anyone else.

Meanwhile, my father had been taking pictures with his little Minolta, as proud as he could be. He greeted me later with a big handshake and a hearty "Well done!" That was surely one of the happiest moments in my life. I had not only recovered honor for our country but had also gained my father's approval in an athletic performance.

Shortly before we left Taiwan, we were invited to the President's home again. This time, it was for a special ceremony: He was presenting my father with the Order of the Sacred Tripod. I assumed that this was a courtesy extended to all men in my father's position, but learned later that Chiang felt especially close to him; I'll explain that in another chapter. Nevertheless, I was deeply impressed as he put the sash with its medal around my father's neck and then gave him a heavy bronze "tripod." I did not know at the time that Chinese had used these brazen vessels for thousands of years for burning incense. By this time I could speak a little bit of Chinese, which delighted the President immensely.

I thought that was the last time I would see the President, but I was wrong. The day before we were to leave Taiwan, I was swimming with my friends at the Officer's Club on Chung Shan North Road when a call came from my mother. "You must come home immediately, change your clothes, and then make your way to the MND Building within the hour," she urged.

"Impossible," I replied. "It will take me an hour just to get home."

"You must find a way," she insisted. "The Gimo wants to see you."

"What for?"

"I don't know, but you'd better be there on time!"

I rushed out to tell my buddies what I was doing, changed into my clothes, and somehow caught a Chinese bus in time to get home and get back downtown in time to meet my father at his office. As the driver took us to the MND Building, I asked, "What is this all about?"

"I don't know," said my father. "All I know is that the Gimo's aide called and said he wanted you to accompany me on my last visit to him today."

I had never seen the inside of the main floor of the MND Building before. We climbed the stairs immediately to the second floor, where Chiang's office was located, guarded by tall solemn guards with epaulets on their shoulders.[15] After an aide ushered us in, I saw only President Chiang and his interpreter, Colonel S.K. Hu. After a brief but very cordial greeting, in which I spoke a few words in Chinese, Chiang motioned my father away and called for a photographer, who appeared out of nowhere. Pulling me to his side, he said he wanted a picture of just the two of us.[16] The resulting photograph stood at the center of my bureau in Pensacola for many years. My father often referred to that incident with near wonder; he considered the President's attention to me extraordinary and was quite pleased with me.

The next day we left Taiwan. I shall never forget it. My father left the house early to say goodbye to his friends on the Chinese General Staff. We were getting ready to go when my mother noticed that Mendiola and Francisco, who had served with my father since 1951, were standing around in ordinary uniforms.

"Aren't you coming to see the Admiral off?" she asked them.

"No, Ma'am," answered Mendiola.

"Why not?"

"The new Admiral" (whose name I shall not mention) "wants us to stay here and clean the house so he can move in this afternoon."

"Admiral Doyle will be very upset if you don't come see him off. You have been with us for such a long time," my mother replied. She couldn't believe how selfish Daddy's replacement was.

So they headed downstairs, changed into dress uniforms, and were right behind us when the car

[15] I was so awed by the surroundings that my memory may be faulty on this point. I think the office was on the right side of the building.

[16] You shall have to trust my story, for I had the photo in my possession until 1980, when we were preparing to return to Taiwan for our second term as missionaries. As we were packing I put it somewhere and haven't been able to find it since.

headed down the mountain for the last time.

When we arrived at the airport the entire field was surrounded with Chinese and American flags, all looking new. Honor guards from the Chinese Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines stood behind the high-ranking Chinese officials on the reviewing platform. Speeches expressing their appreciation for my father preceded his inspection of the guards as the band played. We stood on the sidelines, thrilled.

Meanwhile, an intense drama was being played out near the waiting airplane. A four-engine R5-D (C-54) like the one my father used in Pensacola had been loaned to him by the Commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet. The movers had come late, so all our belongings – including a German motor scooter my father had bought – were hastily thrown into the cabin of the plane, not properly loaded into the hold. The admiral whose plane it was had asked my father's permission for a newly-married couple to fly with us back to the States. Daddy, who was a romantic, readily agreed. The groom was a young Army lieutenant based in Germany; his bride was the daughter of the Army general in Okinawa. They had come to Taiwan on their honeymoon.

When they boarded the aircraft, however, they were refused passage by the pilot, who claimed that the plane was overloaded and could take no more passengers. Considering that this was a 4-engine airplane, that statement seemed ridiculous, but the young couple had no choice but to obey, so they descended the stairway and stood among the crowd. They had no other way to return home; the young woman was in tears.

When it came time for Daddy to receive the final military salute of his 42-year career in the Navy (a 17-gun salute since he had been promoted to full admiral – four stars – upon his retirement), my mother and sister and I boarded the plane. We watched behind him as he received the honors which he returned with his own salute (very painful since he suffered from acute bursitis). While our engines revved up, the guns boomed, the band played, and then – out of nowhere – several dozen Chinese Air Force fighters flew over us in a final tribute to my father. The crew closed the airplane hatch as we taxied away from the crowds who waved farewell.

Then my father – always observant of details – looked around and said, "Where are the newlyweds?"

A crew member replied, "They were put off the plane, Sir. The pilot says that we are dangerously overloaded and can't take any more passengers." My father's former plane captain, Enmire, who was traveling with us, sat in the back, shaking his head and telling my mother in a soft voice, "This is the worst aircraft I have ever seen."

Others might have thought it too much of an anti-climax to go back after such a dramatic send-off, but not my father. Enraged, he ordered the pilot to stop and bring the young couple aboard. He had given his word and would not break it.

People were returning to their cars when our plane wheeled around, cut the engines and opened the door. My father sent word to the newlyweds to come on board. I shall never forget the way

that young woman threw her arms around Daddy and said, “Oh, thank you, Admiral Doyle!”

Thus began the most dramatic and dangerous flight of my life.

The airplane had a private section just behind the cockpit. On either side of the aisle was a booth with a table. We spent much of our time in this section. Behind the booths were sleeping compartments for four people. A door separated our compartment from the one where the other passengers sat in rows of two.

Not long after we took off, my father pointed out the window. Each of us rushed to see a beautiful formation of Chinese Air Force F-86 Sabre Jets fly by in a final farewell formation, emitting colored smoke as they spiraled off into the distant sky. It was a thrilling spectacle.

A while later, I was tired from the excitement of the morning so I lay down on my bed. There was a window next to it. About an hour later, I was awakened by a terrible noise outside the window. I looked out and saw one of the engines on fire! Then the propeller stopped and the engine was silent. I left my compartment and went to see what was going on. The pilot was just informing my father that we had lost one engine but that we could still make it to Japan on the other three. He repeated his claim that the plane was overloaded. Daddy gave him an icy look and said nothing.

After the pilot returned to the cockpit, my father merely said, “There is no way this plane can be overloaded. There's nothing to worry about.” He said no more so I returned to my bunk.

About an hour passed. I was reliving the final ceremonies at the airport, when a loud whine came from the other side of the plane. Then it stopped. I couldn’t see anything so I hurried to the forward compartment with the booths again. My parents and my sister were staring out the window at another dead engine!

This time the co-pilot appeared to announce that we now had only two functional engines. Under normal conditions we could still fly to Tokyo, but (again) since we were overloaded, we were in danger. We would have to jettison some of our cargo. Daddy’s eyes burned with anger but he said nothing in reply. He rose from his seat and led us to the rear of the plane where our belongings had been hurriedly stowed just before take-off. My mother and sister examined their luggage and concluded that nothing could be spared. I had brought little with me so I couldn’t help. My father had only a few clothes, hardly enough to make a difference. But there stood his shiny new red NSU German scooter. It would lighten the plane by several hundred pounds if we threw it into the sea. He discussed the matter briefly with Enmire, who confirmed his judgment that a couple of hundred pounds less would not save enough fuel to make a difference. We returned to our cabin and my father sent word to the cockpit that we would not be throwing anything out.

Suspense grew during the next few hours. Since we had passed the Point Of No Return, we had to keep going towards Japan. The radioman alerted the line of U.S. Navy picket destroyers stretching along the rim of East Asia. They prepared to fetch us out of the sea if we had to ditch

the airplane. The crew gave each passenger a life jacket. We watched as the waves below us became clearer and clearer; once we saw a school of dolphins cavorting. I fancied that they would save us if we plunged into the water. I didn't notice, but my mother tells me that she saw fear on my father's face for the first time in her life. Two engines had gone dead. Who was to say that the other two would not also fail? Enmire's long experience had proven right: We were riding in a miserably-maintained piece of equipment.

The last time I had seen Mt. Fuji, we had soared far above it. Now we flew beside it on our way into Atsugi Naval Air Station. No one breathed easily until we had finally landed.

A car met us and took us into Tokyo, where we once again booked in at the Sano Hotel while we waited for the plane to be repaired. After two days, my father said, "I think we need to go out to Atsugi to speed things up," so we packed up and moved to Quonset huts at the Air Station. My father had gotten rid of the pilot; a young lieutenant had replaced him. My mother says he looked really scared, with an angry four-star admiral as his passenger. When they told us we would have to sleep two more nights in stifling rooms (this was August), Daddy ordered them to open the Navy Exchange. I accompanied him as he went shopping that night in the darkened store. He didn't say what he wanted, or I would have helped him avoid an embarrassing mistake. When we checked out I could tell that he had purchased a portable typewriter. It wasn't until we returned to our quarters that we all saw that it was a PINK "Lady Corona" – a typewriter designed for women! Then we re-remembered that he was color-blind.

We boarded the plane the next day. As we flew first to Hokkaido and then to Adak, Alaska, Daddy taught himself how to type (at age 60). The people in Adak had guests so infrequently that they welcomed us warmly; they said we had brought sunshine with us for the first time in a month. Meanwhile, I was shivering in my summer shorts. All during the long flight to Seattle, we heard my father typing through the night, a big hulk of a man hunched over this small typewriter. He said nothing, but my mother guessed he was writing a blistering criticism of the first pilot and plane captain.

Old friends received us at a Naval station on Whidby Island near Seattle. I drank whole milk for the first time in a year and thought our troubles were over as I lay down on a soft bed in a deliciously cool room. I was wrong.

The transcontinental flight still lay ahead of us as we set our course for Detroit. In the afternoon, however, the young pilot informed us that a huge bad weather system blocked our way. Thunderheads rose so high we couldn't fly over them and tornadoes threatened on every side, so we would have to make a long detour. A couple of hours later, he said we had run too low on fuel to make it to Detroit. He had radioed ahead and received instructions to land in a field on the prairie; a fuel truck would meet us there. We landed in the dark on this empty field – not an airfield, but a clear space on the ground – and waited for two hours for the fuel truck. It never came. My father, who knew our position, ordered the pilot to request permission to refuel in Omaha, Nebraska, at the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command.

I had read about the ultra-secret SAC bases and had seen movies about the bombers that (in those

days) flew over the US, ready to respond to any word of an enemy attack. When we taxied up to the terminal, brilliant floodlights illumined the area. Helmeted guards carrying sub-machine guns surrounded our plane, forbidding anyone except Daddy to enter the terminal. Since my father had to don his hot uniform to do so, the rest of us were only allowed to get off the plane and stand around on the tarmac while fresh fuel poured into the wings of the aircraft. I wondered, "What kind of a risk do we pose?" I guess they had their orders.

We finally took off for Detroit, where we arrived, very tired, the next day. The grateful bride hugged my father again, and we all parted ways.

As I reflect on this journey, I cannot but regard it as symbolic of God's protection of me, not only while living in Taiwan, but throughout my entire life. He must have had a purpose for me (and the others on the flight). The flight also foreshadowed the frustration of my father's later years. Most of all, however, I see our year in Taiwan as God's preparation for me as a future missionary to the Chinese. Once having lived among this marvelous people, I would never be the same again.

First House in Taiwan

With Chiang Ching-kuo & his Russian wife viewing the construction of the East-West Highway

Viewing the opposite side of the gorge

With my parents and Mr. Chiang

Looking at pictures of the highway with Mr. Chiang

Mr. Chiang shows me how to draw a Chinese character

In Taipei after the dangerous flight home

With the American ambassador & R.O.C. & American senior officers

Our second house in Taiwan, on the top of Yang Ming Mountain

The back of the house

With my buddies at the officers' club; I am on the far right

My father's weekly meeting with Pres. Chiang and his interpreter

My father in uniform