

## CALLED TO DUTY

(BECOMING A PART OF CAMP DEERPARK HISTORY)

By Leon F Sinsabaugh

Our Heavenly Father deals with each of His children uniquely. In my case He opens one door and closes the rest, since I'm an opportunist, ready to go through any open door, even the ones with signs that say KEEP OUT! As the apostle Paul said, 'There but by the grace of God go I.'

In the Proverbs, God's word to us says, 'A man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.' That is great comfort and security to me. That God in His tender love and care for us, gives us the independence to be ourselves, to plan, to strive, to seek, to do, and yet He is ever walking by us, able to direct us when we go astray, seeking our own will and selfish desires.

Which brings me to how I came to be the dishwasher at Camp Deerpark. Jan. 2006 I sold our home in Cuddebackville and had planned on sort of semi-retiring. Spending time with my two older sisters, Janet, in Warwick, NY and Shirley at Skiff Lake, New Brunswick, Canada. Being the youngest of 5 children in my family, I was with my older sisters frequently when I was young and was like one of their children, though I was their children's uncle! God blessed our family in that Shirley and her husband, Al Conklin had a dairy farm in upstate NY, where I spent a lot of time growing up and the whole family gathered there for holidays and get togethers.

So having sold my home, and with my daughters grown and on their own, and me needing a place to stay I thought to alternately spend time with my sisters helping them as best I could, till I figured out what to do and where the Lord would have me. The first year after selling the house, I stayed with Janet in Warwick and had the opportunity to build a needed bathroom addition on her house, and helped out "the family". That winter I went up to Canada, and had a wonderful time with my 'second family', enjoying the Canadian winter. Came back to Warwick the following spring with the intent of helping Janet, and getting my old truck 'Betsy' road worthy, to take back up to Canada as soon as possible. One thing led to another, and I found out my truck needed a new engine. It's an amazing story in itself how God arranged events so I could get a rebuilt engine for only \$200. That was a definite gift from my Heavenly Father. So I needed a job, but one that I didn't need a vehicle to get there. Hmmm, what to do? It just so happened (convenient isn't it) (smile) that Ken needed help at camp (I knew Ken and Deborah Bontrager because we attend the same church, Grace Fellowship, in Port Jervis). And our church 'family' keeps each other in prayer for each other's needs. It also just happened that the mechanic who would be installing my rebuilt engine was in Cuddebackville (how convenient). So a win/win situation was set up. I could work at camp, live on campus, so I didn't need a vehicle, and Ken would have the help he needed. That arrangement worked very well and God blessed my time at camp, and I surely felt at 'home' there. There were many times when the Lord made His care for us obvious and it was a joy working with like-minded Christians, being a part of the Camp Deerpark ministry. Ken and Deborah made me feel like one of their family and were pleased with the work I did. But I was keeping to my plan of alternating spending time with my sisters in NY and Canada. So I finally got back to Canada the next winter with 'Betsy' and had taken up most of my stuff, planning to be 'home' there, since I was so close to Al and Shirley and their kids (now grown with their own families). However, I didn't have the peace of mind being there as I had the previous year. And was earnestly praying to be a good witness for Jesus and for His guidance. "I want to be where you want me Lord, not where I want to be."

Well, It didn't take long for a dramatic answer! Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>, a Friday, I decided to take a ride to the States, (the Maine border is only 15-20 minutes from Skiff Lake), since a snowstorm was coming and we probably wouldn't be making our weekly trip over the next day. On the way back across the border, I stopped to ask the border guard, (who knew me and

my family up there) about getting temporary working papers while I was with Shirl and Al. She said, "Oh, no problem, I can call the main office for you right now." So she called and came back and said she had to ask you some standard questions. "Are you a United States citizen? (Yes) Have you been in Canada before? (yes, many times visiting my sister and family) Have you ever been convicted? (no)." After a few more questions she went back to the head official on the phone, came back and said the head border guard would like to ask you those questions again. Well we got to the 'ever been convicted' question again and I knew in the back of my mind this may be a problem. Back in my college days I had been stopped by the State Police and had a pipeful of marijuana in the car. That was back in 1971, 37 years ago. At that time, the law was that if you had less than 7/8 of an ounce in your possession for personal use, it was only a fine, like a misdemeanor. Having obtained my passport and crossing the border numerous times in the past, I didn't believe there was anything on my record to restrict my travel to a foreign country. But God had other plans! The border official told me since I hadn't told him the first time about the conviction and I didn't have any record of the disposition of my case, He was not allowing me re-entry into Canada. I couldn't even go get any of my things! He said if I got copies of the disposition of the case, and paid a fine, I would have no trouble coming back in, but for now, I wasn't allowed!

Well, there was the answer to my prayer. The Lord closed the door to Canada. He didn't want me there. (And I would have stayed as long as I could otherwise). Thank God the border guard knew my sister and let me use the phone to call her. Shirl and Al came over with a suitcase with some of my clothes, my vitamins, my guitar and my video camera. And I had to beat feet back to the States! By God's grace, 24 hours later, I got back to NY (and that is another story of God's amazing provision and care). The next day I went to church in Port and stopped to see my surveying employer to tell him the story, and he was glad I was back as we had plenty of work to do. The Lord opened that door. Then I visited Ken and asked if I still had a place to stay at camp, and Ken said he wished I hadn't left. Another door opened up. I could tell that Jesus wanted me back in the States with my family here and doing dishes at Camp Deerpark. It's comforting relief knowing where you should be and being "wanted" where you go, all gifts of our Heavenly Father. The Lord showed my family and I many things through this ordeal. Human reason says being denied entry into a country for such a minor infraction is ridiculous. But those officials are the authority, and God's word tells us we are to obey the authorities. In my walk with the Lord, I've seen that He uses the authorities in our lives to carry out His will. As the proverb says, 'The King's heart is in the Lord's hand, He directs it as water is channeled in a ditch.'

Being denied entry into Canada was also an illustration of our entry into Heaven by the Law. The least little infraction (sin) will keep you out. What we think is insignificant is not overlooked by our God and Judge. And we are to always be truthful and honest. And that is why we need our Savior, Jesus Christ, His righteousness; His forgiveness that He purchased for us at Calvary with His precious blood. Without Jesus, we will be denied entry!

It was amazing to see God at work and the method and circumstances He used to move me. He also pointed out that He would provide all I need when He leads me. I didn't need my "stuff" that was in Canada. And the work and fellowship I needed, He had for me here. To top it off, little did I know then, of another reason He moved me back to the States. Two months later I had a heart attack and ended up in the hospital, having triple by-pass open-heart surgery! I know I would have been taken care of wherever I was, but it was better all around being close to "home". So I know my Heavenly Father is watching over me, and caring for my needs. Human reason says what happened was absurd, against my plans, etc., but God in His wisdom was using it for my good and in answer to my prayers, to be where He wanted me, becoming a part of Camp Deerpark history, doing dishes at camp.