

Flung into a freefall of Faith

--10 Large leaps of faith in the story of my life.

By KQ

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When I was four years old is when I had to forsake all for Jesus. We had to flee in the middle of the night, leaving all behind! Perhaps if my parents had still stayed in Canada as teachers, rather than forsaking all to serve Jesus in foreign places, things would have been different. But they chose to take the leap and leave it all—including their parents, friends, jobs, and everything, to heed God's call. And none of us regret it. God wins every time.

By the time I was four years old they had been living in Italy for nearly three years to help missionaries be able to teach their own children in fresh, new, Godly ways, while serving the Lord on the mission field.

I don't know who was behind it; who hated us, and why. But ultimately, we know it was Satan. He likes to pretend that he invented the tree of knowledge and greatly guards the seat of education in this world. If others dare to step out and teach their children God's truth, and do so without taking in the many lies that are now taught in schools, he gets pretty agitated. He wants to control the minds and hearts of mankind.

So at the start of my parents' life of service for the Lord, God chose to use the talents and knowledge my parents had in the area of teaching. They both had a rather high level of education, at least compared to most of the older teens and younger people they were serving the Lord with. So it was fitting that they be called on to play this role in the missionary move that was happening worldwide at that time.

By faith they left all they had to serve the Lord.

By faith they got married, not knowing what it would mean, really, in the new and free life they had chosen that worked outside of the realm of man's rule.

By faith they had left all means of gaining income in order to be fully free for God's calling, whatever that would be.

By faith they had a child—me—though they didn't have a way to support me and family, they trusted God. And then had two sons after that as well.

By faith we children were born at home, in a loving, faith filled environment, rather than in a hospital. They were serious about being dropped out from the world and doing things all in a new way. God's way for them at that time.

By faith they left the land of their nativity, Canada, and launched out, not so far away at first, but still it was a leap into the unknown—they went to Hawaii. Hearing the waters and waves on the black sanded beaches of Honolulu was probably one of the first prenatal experiences I had. I lived nine months as a baby there.

By faith they said good-bye to their new missionary friends they worked with there. These friends headed off to be witnesses in Japan and other places. It must have been hard to part, as these were some of their only friends, really, those serving the Lord with them. But the Lord kept and blessed these leap-of-faith friends, heading off overseas to the orient, and 12 years later, they met up again as paths crossed in Japan; when a leap of faith brought us there. But we'll speak of that later.

My parents, while in Hawaii then got their calling, to go to Italy and help with missionary schools and with writing and creating materials for missionaries and their children. They accepted it, though they had never done it before; never worked with their new team before. They said yes, and teamed up with an amateur artist with his wife and two year old girl. Each one of them very different in personality and talents, and ways of reacting to situations, but that is what was needed, all types to work together.

We would be a team for over a decade, through thick and thin, through country moves, and personnel changes. They were the core families that worked and lived together, stuck together, no matter what.

Here is a funny story of how it helped to have people with different preferences working together. My mom didn't wince with blood and medical situations. So when any child of the two families wanted help with their loose tooth, they went to my mom. The other mom could not bear the sight of it. Yet, when I wanted to get my ears pierced and need help to put in earrings, I had to go to the other mom, who had 7 girls. She would help me. My mom couldn't not bear the sight and touch of earrings in skin. So the mom's helped each other in this way.

My dad was always enjoying hiking and mountain climbing on weekends, and would take all the kids on these types of outings. Yet the other family's dad suffered with asthma a lot, so couldn't do these things. It was nice how the children could have their needs met by another family living there with them.

The other dad was very good at playing guitar and singing, and he led the singing and praise time. Fun dancing time for parties were possible because he'd make the music. I learned to play guitar at a very young age because he helped to teach me and wrote a book on how to play. My dad couldn't play guitar, more than a few chords some times, but he could help to write words to songs. So the two of them made many songs and recorded them.

And guess who got to sing on the tapes, that were recorded on big reel to reel machines? Yes, me and the rest of us kids. There were others who helped with the teaching, the cooking, and the other work projects like the photography. It took two men to work on that. Just think, now we have digital cameras and printers and lay out programs, but it took two men, who's main job was working on the photos. This included photos of art that the artist drew, and the finals of the pages of the books created, to be put on camera film.

I saw how important it was to match the right jobs to the right people's talents. Sometimes some might seem to do very poorly at something, but if given a different opportunity they do can do things that you never thought they were good at.

One lady came to live with us, she was from Malaysia. We weren't too fond of her and the way she was. We didn't quite know why. But she was with us often for school time and classes. Because of her faithfulness to help us review our memorised Bible verses each day and sing songs with us, I have so many things in my heart and mind that I have been able to use all my life. But as far as her personality, we didn't click that much.

I see now that it was because she was sad and unable to do what she would best flourish in. As later on she had the job of being one of the main people going out witnessing and learning the local language. And she was so very happy then. She was faithful to stick with something that wasn't what she felt she most wanted to do for the Lord, but then the Lord blessed her with her heart's desire. She was smiling so much more, and relaxed and easy to be with.

When she was on cooking dinner, she didn't know how to work with the foreign types of food—that were foreign to her. But no one complained. None of the adults ever said something negative about her meals. But I had a very hard time eating the bitter boiled eggplant, boiled okra with so much slime it was like eating the uncooked white part of an egg, along with the liver meat that was cooked so hard it was black and burnt, and so tough I could hardly get any bites off of it. So one might say she was a bad cook. Oh, but give her some curry, rice, and chicken to work with, and wow, the dinner was better than anyone else could have cooked.

One time we were going to have a very rare event. We were going to have visitors over to our house. We normally had to keep very quietly to ourselves. We didn't want to have to flee again. My parents had work to do, and it would be hard to bring all the equipment it took to make the books back then. But there was a young couple who was interested in learning about Jesus, that lived near by us.

(One time when there was a forest fire on the hill they lived, later on, we could have them come to our house, to make sure they were safe.) Anyway, we'd invited them to eat a meal with us.

Now who do you think was asked to cook the special dinner? Yes, the Malaysian lady. She was the star cook for that moment, because she was able to do the style of cooking that she knew best. And to make sure the children, all us children, had good manners, what do you think we did? We plucked large banana leaves from the banana plants around where we lived, cut them the right size, cleaned them with boiling water, and set the table with them! These were to be our plates.

The Malaysian lady taught us all the polite way to eat with our hands. So everyone ate with their hands! We had rice and curry sauce with chicken. All day we spent on clean the house in preparation for this event, and doing a very fun project. If we needed something, my dad was very handy at making it. He'd seen his mother be very handy at the same. She lived through the poor times of the depression and could make and fix most things. So, he thought about what was need for this special meal: placemats for the table.

He worked with us children to take an old sheet and make cloth placemats out of this. By the time he was done, they didn't look anything like an old white sheet. We cut them the right size, and dyed them light brown in tea water! We had to work on fraying the edges so they looked fancy. And then we were ready to have guests sit at our very big table.

So between all the team of people that worked together all those years, we had, combined, all the different skills and knowledge to teach us what we needed to learn in our schooling. For example, the mother of the other family was very good at math, and so was my dad. Others could teach us French, and so forth. I did sewing projects and learning typing with my mom. Carpentry work was with my dad, and music and art could be taught by the other dad.

There was one time when my parents had to send me to public school. I went for 7 months. I don't think any of us liked doing that, not us nor our parents. But they were preparing something very special for us. Down in the basement of our house they were building the world's best homeschool set up, with all kinds of gadgets. I'll never forget it. There were these different cubicles that you'd sit at and learn whatever was at that station. For math there was home made and other electronic digital devices to help us learn. For example, if you plugged in the right wire on the math question, and matched it to the right answer, then it would light up. The was a place for learning spelling and so forth. It was very nifty. All kids would have loved to go there.

Until that got set up, we had too much time on our hands and weren't well behaved at all. My parents still had a job to do, and couldn't teach us enough until things got set up. So off to school we went. I don't remember anything that I was taught, but I did learn not to speak or talk, or I got a smack. That was different than at home. The play yard with the children brought new sorts of creatures to play with. One boy would just go around barking like a dog; another boy knew one thing in English "kiss me" and was always trying to get me to. I was just seven.

I had to be woken up so early in the morning it was still dark. If the teacher wanted to teach the evolution class, I think she wasn't meant to teach it to us. So she would just say it in the local language and draw it on the chalkboard. We'd look on and try to figure it out. Two of the children we lived with had it worse, and the bullies would tie up one of the boys. But he was able to be freed and made it safely home. I don't know that we went to that school too much longer than that. But the time passed quickly and we were able to be taught at home again.

Now, back in time again to when my parents took the leap of faith to go to Italy and take on the ministry of making educational and inspirational books for missionary families. It wouldn't be an easy task. There were no computers and digital cameras. They would have to work hard to make any sort of progress. Of course they didn't know how easy it would be to make books many, many years later, so they didn't miss it.

By faith they first went to Canada, when I was 9 months old, and faced all the relatives, and answered the questions that people and parents had, no doubt, about this new life they had chosen, giving up all they had been raised to do—to raise money and work at a job. But through the Lord's help, the finances were raised, the plane tickets bought, and it was their next leap of faith. I was one years old by then.

I have a memory of being too young to talk, but thinking how wonderful it was that my mother knew what I was thinking and trying to express. "Oh, you want to wear your red dress? It's hanging up to dry. You can wear it later." I was happy she understood, and explained. I understood all her words, but just couldn't speak sentences in English yet.

Mother most of the time had to let me be raised and cared for by Italian nannies most of the time, who were trying to learn about the Lord too. I don't remember much from my toddler years, but I do remember that there were at least two if not three of the nannies and childcare helpers called "Rosa". Interestingly, later on, when I was a caretaker of children, and also starting to do writing, my pen name for a little while was "Rosie". I was 17 and 18 at that time

But back to my story.

My mother had to type using an old type of typewriter, to make the books. Click, clack, click, for every single letter. When I was 9 years old there was something I wanted to do more than anything else—I wanted to learn to type. And so I did, using a typewriter. That’s what I learned on, at least the basics. My mother taught me. Later, when 15 years old, and we had computers, I was able to learn better using a program to teach me the skill and speed.

I’ve always loved the feel of typing. I’m glad I don’t use old typewriters, as I make too many mistakes! And the funny thing is, after typing for so long, all these years, my fingers know how to write words that I actually forget how to spell. “Does that word have an ‘e’ or an ‘a’? Awe, let me type it and see if my fingers know.” I don’t think, most of the time about the letters on the keyboard that I’m pushing. I think of a word, and then my fingers that have typed that word so, so many times, know how to do it. First this finger pushes that letter then the other hand does push this key there, and so forth. It’s the same with writing, I’ve written by hand many, many books with a pen, that my hands know what to do. I just “speak the word” and my brain gives the orders of commands to make that word come into being on the page or computer screen.

Photos for the books my parents made took a whole room to create. Usually a spare bathroom or some other room was set up for the photographer to work. It had to have a way to make the room be so, completely black, without a photon of light getting in, for the times of the photo developing where no light should be seen. There had to be a red light also for another part of the process. There were trays with different chemicals and so forth, and tongs to pick up the photo paper and pictures, and a place for them to dry, either flat or hanging up. Usually the children were never allowed in the “Dark Room” as it was called, because of the chemicals. But once or twice we were given a tour and explanation.

For laying out a book it took cutting tools for the paper, rulers and pressers, and a wax machine. I got to help with it one time when there was a tight deadline to get a project done, and they let us older children help. We were so excited. The office that time was set up in a barn on the property we lived on. I got the job of waxing the page portions to be layed out. I think it was one of the Activity Books that were being finished at that time. I was 11 years old. I walked down the drive way, stepped on the curly seed pods that dropped from the tree to hear the “snap” sound, then past the large swimming pool—that toads liked to sing beside at night—and went into the barn to help out. I felt so grown up and needed.

I’d hold this waxing tool in my hand. It was black. Think of it as a hair dryer, but rather than a nozzle blowing air, it had a cube or square shape head. The two main parts of it was a metal roller, a cylinder, like a painter’s roller for painting a wall. But this was small, and metal. And when it was rolled over the pages and cut out bits of paper, it rolled melted wax onto it. So this machine needed a place to put chunks of wax into it. It was plugged in and got hot, so I had to be careful not to touch the roller.

I’d put in the wax and let it melt, and then rolled it over the paper. Then an adult, or sometimes my adopted (half Armenian) sister helped, to place the page parts and pictures, in the right place on the page, very straight and accurately, and press them down with special little plastic tool. When it was done, then a photo was taken of the finished page. The finished page could get printed out and made into a book by the printers.

Anyway, I remember sometimes my mother’s wrists would be bandaged up, with cloth on them, when they were feeling the strain of all that hard typing. Or my dad would be resting with something soothing on his eyes, as they hurt from eye strain, from doing so much writing. But they never complained, and kept doing what they were called to do—to make it possible for lots and lots of children to never have to be taught in the evolution filled schools, with violent children. And there was no reason then why families, large families couldn’t be on the mission field, and serving the Lord together with their children. They didn’t have to send them away to boarding school, like so many missionaries of the past had to do. This was a new way for a new day of reaching the lost in just about every land on Earth.

So back to that night in Italy, when I was four. I went to bed like normal, my two brothers also, after playing with my few toys. Someone had made me a doll house out of a cardboard box. I really liked it. It had a few rooms in it. The funnest thing about it was the flashlight that was hooked on to it. It would make there be a light that could turn on in this mini house. Dollies were my favourite thing. I had dolls until I was nearly 14 years old! By then I had real babies I could hold and care for in between classes and other youth activities, while their mothers worked!

I also had a very special necklace in that place in Italy. It was only used at rare and special times. It was real silver and had a silver star on it. I knew it was in the drawn way up there, out of my reach. And it seemed like very long times of waiting between getting to use it. When I was young, time seemed to pass so much slower. Those are the two things I remember that were special to me. –The doll house and the silver star necklace.

Then at three o'clock in the morning, that night in Italy, I was woken up, and found everyone else was up too. There was a big trunk packed up, and in it was our home's dishes and pots and pans. We took what we could carry easily, and some of the men probably carried out the trunks of a few basic needs. My friend who was five years old, the daughter of the one who did the art for the books being made, had a teddy bear. That was like her dolly. She had all these little clothes she would put on it.

Her mother told her she could bring as many of the clothes for her teddy as she could fit on it. She couldn't bring a bag with toys and all that. Her mother had two or three other children and babies to care for and bring things for. So my friend just piled the clothes on her teddy, in layers. I think she got all the clothes on it, and didn't have to leave any behind.

Then bravely, still rubbing the sleep from our eyes, we headed out into the night. I walked away from my doll house and its flashlight, and the drawers with my necklace and things, and so did everyone else. We quietly and quickly walked away from everything but the few basic things we could carry, and made our escape. To stay free to serve Jesus we had to be willing to leave all else, many times. There were at least 7 children I think on the team, all 5 years old and under. My adopted sister was 10. She was a big girl and could help with the young ones I'm sure.

We had been tipped off that the police were coming to raid our home. They had been misinformed of who we were, by those trying to stop the projects and us. Who knows what would have happened? Jail and who knows what. All I know is when they got there to find us the next morning or whenever, we weren't there. Where were we? On a ship, on a train, walking across fields, and on we were flung by faith into the unknown future.

So we had to leave everything behind in that apartment. I had to forsake all and take the leap of faith with my parents. Serving the Lord will always come with someone trying to stop you. But if you know your goals in life, you know what the Lord wants you to do and you are determined to do it, it hardly matters where you are or who you are with, you'll just keep doing it. It might get hard for a while, or be different, but you'll do whatever you can in the situation.

We arrived in a new country. It was a new leap. My parents probably felt similar to the many gypsies living there, who daily came to our door asking for money and food. (I remember daddy made them be honest with us. He'd tolerate no lies, like "we need money for milk for the baby". He said to them, don't lie to me. If you want it for cigarettes then tell the truth. He closed the door and didn't give them the money when they were lying. But then a moment later there was a knock on the door again, "we need money for cigarettes..." they said. Ha! I don't know if he gave them some that one time, just to reward them for being honest. But I'm sure he didn't do it all the time.

We liked seeing them round though. It made things interesting. They had wagons and donkeys to pull their wagons. Songs like "Gypsy caravan" took on real meaning for our family. We were travellers in a new country, and we had no idea when we'd need to move again. But the green grass was lovely. It was better for us children there, then in the city we had been in. We had fields to run through, flowers to pick, cows to watch, berries to eat when we went out to play. The raspberries had to be covered with netting, or the birds would have eaten them all. And still today, my favourite berries are these! And the daily rain came. It rained for some time every single day that I remember. That is why things were so green. Can you guess what country this was? An "Emerald Isle".

So much happened there. I have so many memories. I turned five there. Our grandparent on my father's side took the big trip to come and see us. We lived in a couple different houses. We got sicknesses passed on to us from a doctor. And we began living with a new family who were going to work with us and help us. But we were only there for 7 months! There were plenty of challenges in that country. One of the babies went to be with the Lord there. The artist family that we lived with for 12 years, had 7 daughters. They had only one son. That boy is the one that passed away when he was a baby. I remember coming to devotion time in the livingroom one morning. Well, it was kind of like our bedroom too, as I slept on top of a big trunk. Those were perfect beds for us children. Just the right size.

It was a different type of devotions that morning. On the table beside the couches was a little coffin. We had a time of pondering and praying and talking about the little one that returned to Heaven. I was told that the boy had died of double pneumonia. Amazingly enough, I didn't feel sad at all. I just accepted it. I think the Lord helped me to feel at peace. Since then, a few times, now that he is older, having grown up in Heaven, he's sent a message to me from Heaven. It's like he's a half brother to me, as our two families grew up together.

His mother and father never spoke about him in a sad way around the children, in all the years that followed. They bore it bravely and moved on. I never realised that it was deep and difficult thing for them until I was a teen and spoke with the mother briefly about it. She was telling me about a witnessing experience she had, and that telling of what she went through with a baby leaving them, helped the person she was witnessing to. She was able to comfort others, because she too had experienced something deep and difficult like that.

The mother, several years later, joined her son in Heaven. It must have been nice for her to have someone to greet her, and maybe who helped to set things up for their family there. Who knows? And guess what? The husband got remarried and had 4 more boys! He was repaid 4 times over by the Lord. –Just like it says in the Bible to do for people, if you take something of theirs. Neat, huh?

Another big leap of faith came a couple years later. It was time to leave Europe and head to new Southern lands. I had to again forsake nearly everything as our family headed for South America. I had a little drawer of things I kept that were special to me, or just were my "stuff". I was to look through it and throw most of it away, and just keep a few things that were really important to me. I know the Lord helped me with that task. To get the reward of going somewhere new, and following where the Lord wanted us to go next, it was a portal I had to get through. I couldn't get on that plane with all this stuff. I had to forsake it.

I still have something that I kept from when I was four or five years old, and I choose to keep it again as one of the few things I brought. It's a gold coloured pin, like a very big safety pin. It was from a skirt I had, and now didn't fit me. I still have that gold pin; just a little something from my childhood. Maybe it's like faith. You can take it wherever you go, it's gold, tried in the fire, and it will help hold things together. All I've been through has added to my faith.

Though I have left people, things, pets, clothes, books, countries, scenery, and all, I still have that golden pin with me, and kept it for 42 years now. And maybe one day I'll get a pin or badge of honour for forsaking all I bravely did, to do what Jesus has called me to do. I've had that pin for nearly as long as it has been when that first leap or shove of faith got us up and moving from our place in Italy.

I remember walking down a red carpet on a road in Italy, giving out tracts to people there. I remember, at two years old, singing to be filmed and broadcasted on television. I remember watching a lady making fresh pasta on a walk through the neighbourhood. And I remember getting a new necklace—one I could make out of coloured beads. A few little fragments of memories these are. But the Lord has the whole video series of what happened every day of my life. And one day I think He'll watch it with me. And then I'll see how everything really did work together for good, and I'll see all the special things He did for me that I perhaps was too young to realise how He was working.

I remember knowing about the letter, "Diamonds of Dust" at three years old or younger. I don't remember reading it, but I was told or read about it, as I knew it. Because one day I found to my delight that if I patted the red sofa, that all this dust fluttered in the air. The sunlight was coming in and all the dust was sparkling. I just loved doing that. I was seeing the Lord's pictures and story lessons in real living view in my life. The concepts of the Word were being shown and taught to me.

And just a year ago or so, I had a very special "diamonds of dust" experience. I was lying in bed, and just like it says in that letter, a ray of light was coming in through the window. It was a beam that was going over me in such away that it lit up the dust above my face. But like it says in that letter, the dust had different colours. When I focused on the coloured dust in that little ray of light, it was a far-out view! It was a view I could have only seen if was flying through space. The stars were all coloured. There were comets and shooting stars. And the stars, these coloured bits of dust that looked just like stars, and just like the universe, were all moving. It gave the sensation that I was zooming through the universe. It was so, so beautiful.

Maybe it isn't only white out there! Maybe one day we'll get to see it in colour. Maybe the black night sky with white stars is just the "black and white" version of a picture of the universe. I wonder! In this mini universe, 3D hologram happening in front of me, a virtual reality that happened on that special morning, it sure was all in colour. All kinds of colours. I just lay there for as long as I could. It was very special. And every time a good shooting star or comet zoomed past I just gasped and ooed and awed. It was a very small vision of it all, but when I focused my view on it and on nothing else in the room, it was like I really was there in space. Maybe the Lord will give you something special to look at, or just make it appear, or take you on a trip through fabulous, coloured stars, like I experienced that morning.

It reminded me of what the Lord showed me in vision one time, before that happened. I picture came in to my mind of Jesus and me were lying down, and He was going to teach me some things about the universe. Then He made this ball of vision appear in the air above our faces. A small one, hovering above, to use as a floating 3D video or something, to show me this and that about the universe.

When this coloured diamond of dust experience happened, it reminded me of that. He has special teaching tools, unlike what we have on Earth. But maybe sometimes He'll use something, and add a bit of extra Heavenly light to it, to show us something far-out while we are still on Earth. Just a bit of light and a bit of dust is all He needed to show me that. I hope I too can stay in His light, so I can shine. If I'm wise I'll stay in His light. And that takes taking the steps of faith, or leaps of faith, move moving on to where His light will keep shining on me, and not holding back.

When we went to South America it was so much better than what we had left behind. We left a mostly cement yard in the place we then lived, and now we were in a property so big, grassy and growing so many types of trees. There was even banana plants and sugar cane growing, and a huge swimming pool where I learned to swim.

The Lord had given the mother who lost her little baby, a new baby girl, and yet another one, and then a set of twins as well. She was given back 4 more children after she had lost one. They were all girls. We had fun together. We loved lying on the green grass with rain umbrellas over us to keep us from the sun. Or we'd play all kinds of running games. We sure had lots of ideas of games to play, as our parents had and were making books to give game ideas to other families. One time we had nearly a new cake every day or two, as recipes need to get tried out and photos taken, to make the section of a book on cake making. That was a fun week! We'd help to decorate the cakes too, and make them real fancy or fun looking. One was like a train with cars carrying lots of goodies.

There were new experiences and animals too. I remember seeing an armadillo in our yard, or monkeys in nearby trees that we could see with binoculars. There were snakes to watch out for. And in one place we lived there were lots of ticks. Small little ticks. So after every bush walk, we'd have to strip everything off and find all the ticks that were stuck on to us, and wash our clothes. We didn't get bothered, and our parents never complained about this. It was just a normal part of life to us, or so it seemed. One time I turned on the tap to get water, and out came muddy water and a large earthworm! We got a water filter after that.

We spent time learning shows and practiced them. And who did we perform them for? The only two visitors we had. –That new Christian couple that lived nearby. But it's a good thing we learned to perform, how to smile, how to sing and such, because the next fling into the air of faith was about to come. I was 11 when it came.

One day the adults were sharing with us some very exciting news. When I think about it now, I wonder if I would have been so upbeat and cheerful, and acting like the best thing ever was just about to happen to us! We got a hand written letter that said their work on the books was now complete. And we were no longer going to be needed or supported for this work, at this time, but were free to live as a regular missionary team. I think they were happy for us, children, because we'd get to at last witness, learn the language and so forth. It was a thrilling challenge.

Our parents got us all so excited about it. It meant we were to move from our very large house in the mountains, to a tiny apartment. Not only that, but to part for some of the time with those we had lived with all our life with. There just wasn't a place big enough to fit us all, closer to the city. (Later on we did find a big enough house.)

It was a time to live by faith, again. Some people came to help us make the transition. They taught us kids songs in the local language, and took us on trips to go to the fish market and learn to provision. I think my parents showed their faith through never voicing the obvious challenge for most people: How are we going to survive financially?

They never once showed fear or concern. They knew as they took the next leap of faith, the Lord would take care of us all.—And there was certainly more children than adults by then—the oldest being 12 at most. And the more children the better, they thought. They just loved them all. But the Lord did take care of us. My dad soon got his inheritance, and I'm sure that helped. And then mostly the Lord just gave us all kinds of free goodies.

I remember it was nearly Christmas. The first Christmas to be in an unsupported situation. We always had to be very frugal, and didn't have many toys or things, and ate very simply. But our parents did get us special little things at Christmas, and we looked forward to it. But I suspected there wasn't spending money at this time. Then the Lord shocked and surprised me. As I sat there for the first Christmas celebration, I saw how the Lord did for us even better than when we had a bit of money for presents.

We couldn't buy things, then so He gave us all these free toys and gifts from people who just thought of sharing things with us. It was all Jesus doing it. I remember it was a real lesson to me and a joy, that Jesus made things even funner and supplied more for us when we were living totally by faith. I think even the joy in my heart of realising that, was such a freedom and was even better than the gifts we got.

This was a huge leap and a very big change, to go from our behind-the-scenes ministry, to being open witnesses, depending on the Lord's supply. It's good we learned to sing and pray with people to receive Jesus, as we ended up doing that a lot. It's even good I learned to play the guitar, as one time I had to be the one to lead the music for our performance for many people.

I think the funnest thing for us kids was, that for the first time in years, we were able to have friends—besides just ourselves in our home. New children friends was the greatest thrill and high I'd ever had. We were able to at last fellowship with other missionary families and make friends. It was so, so great. We didn't mind leaving the lush mountain house that we'd prayer for, for so long and had enjoyed living in. We had a new joy: witnessing and friends.

We went to ships to sing and perform, and pray with sailors to receive Jesus. I even got to quote my memorised John 3:16 in Russian to a stewardess on a communist Russian ship. (When her face turned to scowl, I knew she must have understood what I'd just said. Ha!) We went to beach towns, camping for days to get out many many posters with the message of Jesus, Heaven, and salvation.

It was through witnessing, even though I was so very shy, was when I met someone who was very, very special to me. I fell very deeply in love with a young teen my own age, and he with me. After singing for these young people at the campground, he prayed with us to receive Jesus, and so did the other children who were praying with us all.

I had never known what it meant to be in love. And a year later when we met again after writing to each other for a year, we were walking under the stars holding hands.

But that is all we saw of each other, a few hours in our life, outside at a campground. And he left his mark on my heart for the rest of my life. And then the next leap of my life of faith came.

When I was young, the things I had to give up to follow Jesus were things like pictures I drew, and cardboard toys, and a few other things. I grew out of clothes and shoes that I liked too. I always had to and always still have had to forsake things. I can get rather used to it. I forget about things quickly, when in a new situation. However, growing into a young woman the forsakings were more costly.

My parents were again offered a place to serve the Lord using their talents for making teaching materials and counselling teachers; a place they would be supported and could focus on it. There was a need for them in Japan at a big missionary school. This would mean leaving so, so much—they and I.

I would have to leave and never see again, the one I was so, so in love with. And it was the country I had enjoyed living in the most. We'd have to leave all the families we lived with for nearly all my life. It would just be our family heading out to the orient.

It was a decision my parents had to make. We children would need to go along with whatever they chose. This was a very big step in my life. And so we went! It held an excitement, to be flung out of the next nest and have to learn to fly in new skies.

And oh, it was so very different in our new place. Nothing was the same at all from my last place. From the freedom of the country we were in, to the conservative Japanese. From just being with a few people I knew and being with my parents and brothers and sister, I was now not with them for the most part, but in a huge class of teenagers, like boarding school. I was shy, oh so shy. From taking showers alone, to taking group showers with the other teen girls in big room where you all pour water on yourselves to get clean. You sit on a stool and use buckets and such. Everyone there was used to it. That's the way the locals lived.

It was radical for my parents then be in this washing room for the first time after just arriving in this place, and have the door open and old friends of my parents, too eager to meet them to even wait till they got dressed to say hi. They'd said good bye to each other in Hawaii, and now they at last met again. So they had to leave many dear loved ones in the last country, but here were new friends so eager to see and be with them. It was a fun reunion.

I lived there and in other places, having classes and helping care for little children too.

But after about a year or so, it was time for the next wild fling of faith into the unknown.

I was old enough now that it was up to me to make the decision whether I wished to go with my parents to the new ministry opportunity, or to stay there in Japan. Others could give me foster care if I wished to stay.

Why was that a tough choice? The costs were yet greater. The giving was even more. But would I forsake all and follow what Jesus wanted me personally to do? Up until then I didn't really need to ask the Lord where I was to serve Him, and what I was to do with my life. That was up to my parents. But now at 14 it was put to me to decide.

I could either go with my parents to help once again in a behind the scenes situation to make books and teaching supplies for missionaries, or stay. One of the things that made it challenging was the fact that one of my brothers was going to stay in Japan and be cared for and raised by another family. That is where he would be happiest, and have the learning opportunities he needed. My sister by this time had her first child and was living somewhere else. And after having swarms of teens around that I could have been friends with—if I hadn't been too shy to reach out—I was going to a place with only one other person my age, a teen girl.

I would stay tucked away learning there, and helping to care for children of the other parents who my parents worked with. And to add to the challenge, there was no view in sight of things changing for years. I was to commit to doing this and being there "until Jesus came back" as the invitation and letter of explanation said. I couldn't just go there, and then think I and my family would just pick up to leave after a few months or a few years. It was a total dedication, giving my life and service to helping be a long-term member of this team, to support their mission, and learning what I needed to study and learn. No one had to come, those who do needed to be serious this was God's place and call for them.

I felt so totally incapable of making this decision on my own, yet no one in the world could tell me what the future held, and if I would be happy there. I had to walk alone with God on this one. It would be a total leap of faith into the future. And besides my parents and brother, I didn't personally know anyone I'd be living and working with. I hadn't even met them, or most of them. And even if I had briefly met them, I didn't know they were on the team.

To make it more challenging, due to the security of the situation, I could not know what country we were to go to. It was to remain a secret to me until I was on my way to the airport. Now is that a leap of faith?

Well, since I said here "on my way to the airport" you can see how I did choose to go.

But let me tell you how I could know for certain that it was God's will and plan for me. First it started some months before when I dedicated my life to serving the Lord with all my life on Earth. So with that foundation laid, a decision was fairly simpler, all I had to know was what Jesus wanted me to do. I do remember the day, those many months before, when I chose to give my life to the Lord and serve Him. The surge of total joy and extasy that filled my heart was a thrilling surprise. I was flying high all day. I think it made the Lord just about as happy—or maybe a bit more.

And what laid the foundation for evening being able to fling my life on the Lord, to let all my life be used by Him and for Him? My faith had been building year by year, day by day. I saw the sample of it in my parents and others. I heard what others said who had given their life for the Lord. I'd read His Word from the Bible, and read what others said about living for Jesus. I tested the Lord myself, to see if He was real and actually heard my little prayers. And He did!—Much to my pleasant surprise. My brother, who I was going to leave and hardly ever see again for the rest of my life thus far, was still alive because of fervent daily prayer while his life was in the balances in the hospital due to infections with appendicitis complications, before our move to Japan. I had sung, wholeheartedly, many songs of dedication, and these have a great way of moving you to do what the song says, because the Holy Spirit can come through when you are singing and it can call you close to Jesus.

So before making this leap—and either choice in this fork in the road of life would be a leap—I asked someone: “How do I know what the Lord’s will is for me?”

“Read God Word and pray,” I was told. So I did that. And the first thing I read showed me so, so clearly, right into my heart, what I was to do. And so the next step of freedom was taken. I said, “Yes I’ll go.”

So far I’ve seen, that when I was to take a jump into the air, holding to nothing but faith, I had to forsake and leave plenty behind. And at each stage I had to leave something of greater value to me than at a younger age. But yet when my feet touched the ground, in the new place, there were things I didn’t expect I would have. Things that were much better for me in some way than the last place had.

So what was better when leaving all I did and being part of a tucked away secret team, with little to no contact with people my own age? Well, when I had lots of teens around me, I didn’t actually have even one person that I could call a personal friend. But now with only one option, this other teen girl, we both became very close and happy friends. We got along so well. Though we were totally different than each other in many ways, somehow we were friends, and did so much together. Maybe that’s what I needed so I could learn how to develop friendships, which I hadn’t been successful at before.

My youngest brother was given a new brother to be with, a boy just his age was there, who had no brother or sister, and they were best buddies. I got to learn and grow in all the kinds of skills that I am so very glad to have learned. There were always little leaps and jumps and steep mountains to climb on during that part of my life as I was being quickly shaped for adulthood. But once the purging and trying and strengthening of the teen years and early 20’s passed, the road was somewhat less jagged, though always with a challenge, and always with forsakings of some kinds. Always with tears. Yet also with special highlights that made the walk of faith I was on worth it or buoyed me up to keep taking one step at a time.

Then one fine day, I faced the next great leap.

I had stayed faithful with this team of behind the scenes book makers for missionaries, and now a letter came for me. It didn’t come as a total surprise, as the leap I was to next take was so big it would take me a year or so being prepared in mind for it. The Lord had been telling me in advance that the time to move on to a very new situation would come, and I was to yield to it.

Remember the artist and his family? His first wife and only son had passed way. Now he was remarried and had four sons. His wife and him were about to have their own large leap of faith, and give birth to a handicapped baby. They wrote me and asked if I could come and help be a nanny for their boys during this very challenging time that would take nearly all of the mother’s time.

By this time I was happy enough where I was. And remember I had committed to be here for the rest of my life. And I wasn’t planning on going to go back on my word. But the Lord had other plans. It wasn’t about what I said I’d do, but all about following Jesus and doing and being where He needed me.

In that situation I started to have something wrong with my health. Sometimes I couldn’t even get off the floor, I would sit so, so weak. There was nothing wrong with me that doctors would find, or at least would admit. Or perhaps they didn’t know. I still had no “love of my life” or hope of marriage, though there were others my age around working with us. I had fallen somewhat in love, but that wasn’t meant to be, and left me very broken and in need of healing.

So the question remained: Would leave what I knew to be my clan, my team, for years, to go and live by faith as a missionary in new places? It was everything I didn't really want to do, and I certainly didn't feel physically capable. But the Lord led me and told me to go. As soon as I was sure it was His will, so I went. I remember sitting in the livingroom at devotions time one morning, asking for prayer for my new step in life, and for my health and a bunch of other things. I was so weak physically I hardly could do much that morning. Just walking to that room and sitting there was a challenge. So that took faith. And as I went, I did get healed. Praise God.

So, I forsook, again, nearly everything I had, all the "family" I had known, all the new friends, the children I cared for, my ministry, supported security, most of my clothes and possessions, and plunged out. First working in one country with the artist family, and then when they had their care needs met by others, I went further to a place where there was threat of civil unrest. These were days, a few years worth of days, out of my comfort zone. It was a culture shock in some ways, but as long as I realised I was freefalling and wasn't meant to feel all normal, but just learn how to fly, then it was alright. I was a fish out of water. Alone in the wind.

Then I was ready for the next leap of faith. I was very unexpectedly, suddenly taken into someone's heart. They knew they wanted to marry me, right from the start. Even before they met me they knew the Lord was sending me to them.

After a year of getting to know each other, we wanted to make the decision of yes or no, for a life together as a couple. Now you might think this was an easy thing, but by that time I had already chosen to never get married. I didn't want my heart to get hurt, and I wanted to focus on helping others to care for their children. So it came as a total surprise to me. It would be a total change. I would no longer, for the rest of my life, be as independent as I was. It would be team, and not just me. After much careful thought and prayer, and seriously asking the Lord what His will was for me, since it was He that I gave my life for, then I knew it was His will. And so I said yes. And I'm glad I did.

This started a very, very different set of lessons, challenges, and new things to learn, and new people to love—including the three new children I'd never met before, that were to be a special part of my life, my own three sons.

Perhaps when you are a lonely single, some people might think that getting married is the ultimate, and all troubles will cease once you do. But really, it's just graduating from one set of challenges, to leap into a whole new and more complex learning scenarios.

Having children was a huge leap of faith. No longer would I just have me to look out for, but I would no longer exist, the me that I used to be. Instead it was time to let another live, and to lay down myself will and even basic daily or hourly needs, to sustain another's life and give them a chance, just as my parents and so many others had done to help me.

But when I felt that love for my children, and loved them so much, I wanted to have 12! Then I felt like I had just woken up in new world that I never knew existed. I'd seen it from the outside, always as an observer, and thought there wasn't much else to it, but when I became a parent, I saw it was a different learning station altogether, and a different dimension in a way, with totally new perspectives and insight, feelings and goals.

No longer was it about me, but about them, about caring for these little ones. I wish someone had told me about this new world that existed along side the other one I was living in. I thought it was all the same, but it's something you have to experience to know. And because of my caring for my children, this opened up the most fulfilling ministry I have ever done. Guess what?

The same in many ways as my parents: making books and materials of all sorts for raising and caring for children, to be used by Christian families, and others, all over the world. —One day, when I get it done. It seems it's taking a long time. Almost as long as the years my parents worked on books before we were flung out to do new things for awhile.

Of course, since I can do it so much easier now with all the technology available—in fact I can do the whole thing, on my own, nearly, or via the internet to get others' help—I can still care for my children at the same time. I can make a whole library of books, and many learning programs, without using a darkroom, a waxer, a layout board, getting sore wrist from typing, nor do I need to have a team of nannies and teachers and cooks to help.

Surely the Lord has given me a much easier time than my parents. And so is it with missionaries too. In by gone days they had challenges that we today don't have, yet they persevered. We have ease of travel and getting our needs met, and perhaps in some places and at times, there is a little less persecution than the early Apostles had at the very start of spreading the Gospel. So we must each do the most we can for the Lord, in the given circumstances. We each must follow, forsake, follow some more, walk by in faith, each day of our lives. It won't stop. We won't settled down. There will always be some new challenge to embrace and fling out in faith to tackle, if we are still following the call of Jesus, day by day.

And now I sit here, pondering these leaps of faith. I have a very good reason to. You see, I'm facing the next one just now. I see how the Lord has helped me to forsake bigger things each time, with each new leap; yet also brought new joys and fulfillment that the previous part of the walk of faith or situation didn't have.

I'm sitting here about to take my next leap.

It might seem small to some. But I think each person's tests of faith are suited to them.

What do I have to give up this time? Maybe everything, sort of. I have to give up the way things are and the way I hoped they would be. I have to give up most of my time and night's sleep. I have to put aside the freedom I've had to work on the books I so wish to finish. I'm being a mother again of a little one, and needing to make all the changes that it means. I'm taking on the life-long responsibility of another mother's child. A child who has never met me, really. I don't see how the future will take shape, and there are so many challenges ahead.

But I have done just what I have done with all the other choices. I have asked Jesus what His highest will for me is. Since I am living for Him, I have to do whatever He wants me to do, and knows is best.

And since He said I am to help raise this little one and take him in, so I will leap, holding on to faith, and do it.

I have no idea what two weeks from now will look like. But the Lord has always held me, brought me through each life change, and made something better than the stage I was in before.

I don't know how. But in some way it will be better, along with new challenges greater than I've ever known before. I'm still squirming in discomfort looking out the door of the airplane that I'm going to be plunged out of very soon; an airplane I can never climb back in to. But I know I'll learn important things that will help build on what I have learned thus far, and get to put into practice things I have learned and feel fulfilled doing so.

And I do wonder, just what will change for the better? I'm not holding my breath for it, but as the story has gone so far, there is bound to be some perks, along with many tears and rough times. But all I have to do is keep breathing, and talking one step at a time, once I hit the ground and roll. He'll hold out His hand and pick me up and say, "Let's explore. It's going to be a challenge, but we are together."

But I'll never get to experience the next part, and see what Jesus has planned for me, unless I...

Leap! Take the leap of faith and fly through the air!