

Meyer, Marg (Magowan)

I was born and raised...kinda. My dad took Mom and our family to meetings but never professed himself until he and I stood to our feet at convention simultaneously one year when I was about 13. Dad was a critical thinker; that's why I think it took him so long. Mom wasn't. And Mom had 2 older brothers who professed before she did who she looked up to quite a bit. She had a faith that was very simple and black and white. If the workers said it, she believed it.

One of those older brothers that I mentioned of Mom's, had actually went preaching for a short length of time with Eddie Cooney in Ireland when Grampa sent him there for a time. But Eddie Cooney was quite a powerful preacher and Uncle Bill just wasn't powerful. In Sunday meetings, he was very very sincere, earnest, soft and loving... NOT powerful! So he got discouraged quickly and stopped preaching with Eddie. (This uncle was Edgar Massey's dad).

When Uncle Bill returned from Ireland, he started having meetings in the home he grew up in, and Gramma, my mom, Uncle Howard and Uncle Bill were the 4 that attended. It was quite hard for Uncle Bill when he found out that Eddie had been excommunicated, but somehow Willie Smiley (Saskatchewan overseer) was able to sort that out for him.

Mom met Dad at teacher's college, they married, and I was born in 1954, oldest of 4. My brother came next in 1955. Then 6 and 9 years after me, came another girl and boy. We were known as the "big" kids, and the "little" kids. I noticed during the years that we were being raised, that my parents were an awful lot more lenient with the "little" kids than they were with myself and my brother next to me. My brother and I endured the strap at times.

(One of my brothers just left here after visiting for the weekend: we got talking about the 2x2 crisis and he mentioned that back in the day, Dennis Eienboden shaved his head! Dennis had said, "We don't want you looking like your older brother!!" Mom had been there and had said nothing. I could tell that Jim still felt resentful, and rightly so.)

I now know that when I was little, I needed my mother emotionally much more than she was available. Later in life I figured out that she suffered from clinical depression and just was NOT available emotionally for her kids. It took all of her strength to cope with the physical side of raising 4 kids.

I have a memory of being lost in the Eaton's store in Moose Jaw when I must have been about 2. I was screaming...terrified...the staff found me and called for my parents. It was Dad who took me in his arms, not Mom.

When my baby sister came along in 1960, I had heard on the radio that Dad listened to sometimes, that 5 babies had died in the hospital. Mary, my baby sister got sick, was taken to the hospital, and I got hysterical!! It was Dad who asked me what was wrong, explained that she wouldn't die and comforted me.

From listening to Dr Ruth Cohn on the internet, I am gaining understanding about the Trauma of Neglect. I probably have more separation anxiety than lots of people. It's good to become aware of oneself, and to get an understanding of maybe how that came to be.

In 1976 my sister became pregnant. This was devastating to me. I was 22 at this time, living in Saskatoon and teaching north of town. It was arranged for her to stay with me the last few weeks and to be delivered by Dr Lois Stewart who attended meetings. This was arranged by my parents through Willis Propp. While she was staying with me, the workers arranged she meet with 2 couples: professing, one couple who wanted to adopt a boy, the other couple wanted to adopt a girl. I wasn't invited to be involved in this at all. My sister went through this by herself. She was 16. The baby was a girl and the (still prospective) parents wanted to call her Sherry. It angers me, still, that the workers took full control of this situation. I held her before her adoptive parents did.

After that year I moved to Lanigan, a town east of Saskatoon. My second year there, I was looking forward to Mary, my sister, moving to Saskatoon, to enter university for teacher training. One of the worst days of my life is the day in the fall when I got the news from home that my sister would NOT be going to university, she was pregnant again and moving to northern BC. I could not even talk about this with ANYONE. The pain did not go away until Liz was born. I would smile wryly when Liz would brag, "I've had more fun than Austin (her younger brother) because I went with Mommy and Daddy on their honeymoon."

Well, I got older...and there are only 2 choices, marriage or the work if one wants a companion. I had been SURE I would never be called into the work! I was NOT a good person!! But I wanted a companion. And I became willing. Totally 100% willing!! And the blessing/joy just poured in!! As a result, I have NEVER doubted my calling to be in the work. For those 15 years...I was where I was supposed to be.

The first 2 years I spent in the work were joyful. The years after that were less than joyful. I started to see lots of stuff that was disturbing.

Mike Hassett was home from Ecuador one time and speaking at a convention. He IS a powerful speaker, but I took exception to something he said and wrote to him about it. I never heard back from him on that subject. I now know that he sent that letter to Dale Shultz, our overseer at that time. BUT what Jesus taught was that you are to GO TO the person who has an issue with you with one or 2 others and get the issue resolved. My relationship with Dale Shultz deteriorated from that moment. I never received much "responsibility".

My third year in the work with Agnes Smiley was very lonely. She was, even at that time, old, and old in her ways. She got after me for the way I did my hair, which I STILL hold against her! Think of it!!! I had been a professional before entering the work; I was 35 years old and someone is more concerned with my hair than ANYTHING else??????? Her pace around the field was slow, even for me. One morning we were in Swift Current and I went to visit a single mother. When I got back, she was indignant, because she had planned for us BOTH to visit that person that afternoon. That field has huge distances and not many friends. One friend I DID appreciate a WHOLE bunch was Grace Studer who lived in "the boonies" at Eastend. She was a Gem!! She and I "connected", whereas I didn't connect with many that year.

One time at preps, the worker staff were in the kitchen for a break and discussing some funeral. Mildred Ausenhaus made the comment that when speaking at a funeral, one has to deliver the Gospel adamantly, because that's the last time you'll ever get the opportunity to preach to LOTS of those folks, because they mostly don't choose to go to Gospel meetings. If

that comment doesn't sound like they think they're "it", what does????? I found it very offensive. We don't go to funerals to hear the Gospel...we go to hear about the one who passed from us. Please be respectful.

I DID feel sorry for Mildred. She and Marion Crawford were similar in age and experience, but Marion was kinda an aristocrat, and Mildred didn't have the same degree of admiration from people. That would be hard to bear over the decades.

About finances, I had lots to go on my first 2 years, after that not so much...and NEVER enough to get a new coat. The Swift Current year, I hardly had enough for gas. Merlin sent me 100 bucks in the mail that year which was GREATLY appreciated. I believe lots of our friends don't realize when they give to the overseers, that it doesn't "trickle down, except for once a year after the last convention". I was visiting a couple with Jack Price on special meeting rounds one year, and the man went into the bedroom and came out with something that he was delighted to give to Jack. Jack pocketed it without asking if I needed anything. That was just the way it was! I wasn't expecting anything else; I just noticed.

One of the unwritten rules is that we are not to accept money gifts from those who do not profess. This is so that those people understand that they are not part of us. Margaret Hanson told this story on herself. A lady they were visiting gave her \$20. But she wasn't professing. Margaret didn't return the money, but later went back to visit her, giving her a set of towels. How would THAT help the lady realize that she didn't have salvation????

Dale Shultz told a story on himself, that he was going to have a visit with a lady about the shortness of her skirts. Then he realized that she was probably attempting to get her husband back... they were separated. I remember thinking, but if that IS a rule, shouldn't it be "the rule" ALL THE TIME????

Dale was also giving us workers some pointers in a rather informal setting, telling us that if we're wondering what to do, just follow and do what MOST of the others are doing. I was SHOCKED, because Stanley Sharpe used to preach often, "Right is right, even if no one is doing it, and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it". I had a lot of respect for Stanley; I was having less and less for Dale.

Before I went into the work, I remember visiting with Don Puffalt and Bob Colvin at my parents. I was telling my testimony and mentioning that this all really started when Uncle Bill met Eddie Cooney in Ireland. Don immediately said, "Oh, I don't think I'd mention that!" I remember thinking, "And why not, because it's the truth?"

We were singing, "Love is the Kingdom's Banner" at special meeting once, when I looked around and the thought came to me, "But there is no love here!"

At Theodore convention one time, I preached that you can't trust ALL the ones that are over you. Yes, I actually did that! A few days after that, Mary Roper and I were in Regina, and Dale called me and told me he wanted to have coffee with me. (This was NOT a good omen). At that coffee visit, he told me not to preach that again! And there was no room left for rebuttal. But WAIT A MINUTE!!! HE WAS TELLING ME NOT TO DO SOMETHING THAT GOD HAD TOLD ME TO DO!!!

At one point, my companion and I had a very worldly fellow coming to our meetings. We had some coffee visits with him...he seemed VERY interested in scripture. My companion would speak with him on the phone, and eventually I did as well. After some time, he made it clear that he wanted to go to bed with me! I was in a VERY difficult position! I was in shock as well!!! REAL SHOCK!! But also, I was responsible for his salvation...or felt that I was. Long story short: Dale Shultz and Jack Price were both overseers over some length of time and were absolutely NO help at all. I felt like many victims have described...being verbally raped while my companion and these overseers looked on.

At one point I was able to attend a group counselling session with Dr Greenspan in Kelowna BC. I don't know if I would have been allowed to go, except Willis Propp was attending as well. I saw how group counselling works!

After he introduced himself, Dr Greenspan needed volunteers. I asked if I could go first. He was quite rough with me, asked me WHY I WAS ASKING!!!!!! From that, I got the clear message that I didn't need to ask any more!!!! This was the beginning of my freedom, but I had a LONG ways to go!

Judy Scheller became my companion, and this was a godsend. She had taken courses on how to help people who had been sexually abused. She shared this with me and let me know that she would be on the phone a lot and unable to share with me what she was talking about. I realized that this could help me. I wrote out MY experience and read it to her. She LISTENED and VALIDATED. That was all I needed from her.

But I was still angry with overseers...Jack in particular. I used his name inappropriately from the platform at convention. I was very obviously a big problem, so he sent me to Manitoba for 2 years. My first year there, I was with an older lady who suffered from depression. My second year I was placed with Ardith Fritz...I don't understand why, but when I was with her, my spirit just started to die...I had to ask Alton, the overseer, for a different companion. That was really hard, because I really believed that it was God's will that you were with the companion that you were paced with. The rest of that year went better. But preps was stressful because it looked to me like I would have to cook, and I knew I couldn't...I just didn't have the emotional strength. Somehow, I was spared...and Denise Thune did that. I am grateful to her!

Back home in Saskatchewan! After special meetings and conventions, my parents would come from British Columbia, pick me up, and take me back with them to BC. After special meetings, 2000, Dad did this. While visiting in Vernon, BC, the elder of the union meeting and his wife, were very concerned and upset that her brother and his wife were upset with many decisions that Willis Propp had made in Alberta about money and other things. I listened. And I asked if they and her brother would like me to stop and visit them in Calgary on our way back to Saskatchewan. It was arranged for us to do so. So Dad and I stopped and visited with O'Dells in Calgary, Alberta. Others heard that I was listening to O'Dells and wanted to be heard as well. So Jordans and Parsons came later...just to tell their story and be heard.

Back in Saskatchewan, Jack Price's brother-in-law had just died. I would be expected to attend the funeral since it would be in my field. But EVERY worker in Saskatchewan would be there...Mary Roper my companion would have all the support that she needed and then some! This would be taking place immediately, and I decided to delay my departure for

Saskatchewan for a bit while I visited with these folks who were hurting. So I was NOT at the funeral.

In February there was a gathering of workers in Regina Saskatchewan. Dale (who was overseer again), asked where I was staying the night. I told him and the next morning I got a call from him that Mary Roper (my companion) would be picking me up and bringing me to Den and Jan's house. (They were both working.) Oh, oh! Bad omen!

I should insert a note here about "rules" in the 2x2's. Basically, there are NO rules until there ARE rules. And there ARE rules until there AREN'T. An illustration of there being no rules is this: several years previously, my companion and I had meetings in a fairly remote area (Meadow Lake), which was close to the Alberta border. There were a fair number of friends across the border in Alberta which would come across and help with the numbers in our Gospel meetings... in Saskatchewan, and my companion and I felt free to visit THEM in their homes in Alberta. At that time, we were NOT reprimanded for visiting out of our field by EITHER the Alberta or the Saskatchewan overseer.

When we got there, I sat around the table with Mary, Dale, Merlin Affleck and Jim Atcheson. Dale quizzed me about my visit in Calgary... was there a gathering? Who was there? Why did I do this? How do I think the Alberta workers feel about that? How do I think the Saskatchewan workers feel about that? Jim said, "These people are sinners!" Merlin said, "This Alberta business is all over the internet." I didn't defend myself or give away any information; I knew there was no point. I was told the choice for me was to promise to not visit those folks or to leave the work. For me, there was no choice. I was NOT going to NOT visit those folks. When I told the 3 brother workers: Dale Shultz, Jim Atcheson and Merlin Affleck, and Mary Roper that I would NOT stop visiting in Alberta, as they were telling me to, that was the FIRST TIME I had ever refused to do what was asked of me!

You see how there are no rules...until there are???

Mary drove me back to our field; I picked up my stuff and Helen Furtan drove out from Saskatoon and took me back there where I stayed a month or so before I went visiting around Alberta...which was exactly what the overseers did NOT want me doing...but, hey, I was FREE now!

A few weeks after Dale Shultz put me out of the work, he sent me an email asking for some information on a particular subject. (I had a little emailer at that time... not a computer... it was 2001.). I felt very violated by this! Imagine the audacity! He had just "fired me"! And then acted on a presumption that I would still cooperate with him! I answered him by telling him he could phone me or write, but to no longer send me emails.. Period. I set a boundary. And that felt SO SO good!. And I haven't heard from him since. Yes, that is very different behaviour than is expected from sister workers. Doing it felt strange at first, but one does get more and more comfortable with it as one practices.

It was left that I could still attend meetings, but I could feel discomfort from those attending and after awhile, I quit. I wrote a short one-page letter* to every worker in the 4 western provinces telling them what happened. Something was telling me to send it to ALL the elders of every field I'd been in as well, but I didn't. I've been sorry ever since that I didn't do that.

At one point, John O'Dell asked me if I had thoughts of starting gospel meetings. I started to cry...I hated gospel meetings.

I looked for work after almost a year. The best job I had was working in the bakery at a Sav-On grocery store. Not many are willing to hire a woman almost 50 with gaps in her resume.

And I had very spicy conversations with God about his promise to provide me with a companion. His answer was to "Wait!" For 2 years. Then Lance Meyer walked by the bakery at 10 to 10 on a Sunday morning and asked me for coffee. I asked him if he was going to meeting... he said no. We went for coffee...I was off shift at 10...Lance was one of the people from Alberta who had come to our Meadow Lake meetings in Saskatchewan. He was a divorced Ex-2x2 by this time. Lance and I talked all that Sunday. God understood that I wanted a companion...I clearly heard Him tell me that if this was what I wanted I could have it. I understood that he was God's choice for me. We were married 3 months later.

The first year after that was OK. Then Lance's adult son came to live with us off and on, but he was addicted to drugs and was developing schizophrenia, which took several years to get a diagnosis. Life was very difficult for about 10 years, until Ira decided that he didn't want to live like that anymore, accepted his diagnosis and got himself off of street drugs. I considered leaving Lance several times, but where would I go????? AND he was God's choice for me!!! I finally settled it that if I were to die in this situation, so be it...because Ira had a gun because of his very bad friends.

And I know that Lance would never leave me!

Since he got himself clean, Ira is a sweet boy in a 47-year old body. He even gave me a Mother's Day card this year.

Sherry has been reaching out to my sister to get to know her. I have tried to reach out to her, too, but she has let me know that she does not want that...she just wants to get to know my sister. So be it. She has set a boundary. Good for her. Boundaries keep people safe. People MUST be allowed to say "no"!

One of my sister's grandchildren committed suicide when she was 16. I babysat a lot. She was the closest thing to a grandchild that I will ever have. She was the favourite sibling of all of her siblings...it was amusing to listen to them discuss this among themselves.

Life definitely has its ups and downs.

Life is very good for me at the moment...has been for several years now...lots and lots and lots of joy.

Marg (Magowan) Meyer
Creston, BC, Canada
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*The letter that I had written to the workers after being put out of the work in 2001 is posted on this site at:

<https://ex2x2.info/2020/11/06/magowan-marg/>