

Introduction

Let me make something clear from the beginning. Writing my memoirs does not mean that we are retiring. Far from it. We intend to be in missions for as long as God wants us here.

This book is about leaving a legacy, hopefully a good one. In every one of my personal journals I write these thoughts on the first page, “Live, love, laugh, learn, lament, leave a legacy worth following.” I have tried my best to do this here, but you can be the judge of whether I have succeeded.

Why do it now? Most people think about leaving a legacy for their children and grandchildren. The problem for Debbie and me is that we do not have any biological children. But we do have a lot of spiritual children, those whose lives we have touched for Christ in some way over the years. Since most of those spiritual children are in Asia, especially the Philippines, I wanted to write this memoir now while we are still here to help get this book into the hands of as many as possible.

In this book I have done my best to trace the major events, both good and otherwise, and describe the people that God has used to shape my life and made me into the person that I am. Since the people God has used most in my life are my parents, I will start at the beginning and try to trace the things that they taught me in my growing up years, through my time in the Navy, the years of theological education afterward, and the more than three decades of ministry that have followed. Along the way I have been mentored by a small legion of pastors, Bible college and

seminary professors, other leaders and authors beyond number. In many respects, I am what I am today because of them.

Most of the book is in chronological order. However, since we have been involved in many ministries simultaneously in our years in missions, I do not always follow a strict chronological order in those chapters. I found it necessary to weave back and forth chronologically in those chapters in order to present each ministry in a coherent manner.

Over the years, my life has been touched and enhanced by more family members, pastors, Bible school and seminary professors, friends and colleagues than I can possibly name here. For those unnamed, I beg your forgiveness. Please know that I have not forgotten you.

As you read these chapters, my prayer is that you will not only find hope and inspiration from what God has done in my life, but that you might also learn some lessons from the mistakes I have made. Furthermore, I pray that you will consider the question as to what kind of legacy you will leave behind. Finally, I hope you think about how you might equip those who follow you, be it your own children, grandchildren, family, friends, or others, to serve the purposes of God in their generation (Acts 13:36).

I welcome your comments. You can reach me by email at dave.johnson@agmd.org.

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