

Dear Friends, far and near,

It was 85 years ago that I first knew I was a sinner and needed a Savior.

It was during the Great Depression and we walked everywhere we wanted to go. Mother did not take us to church unless something special was going on because it was too far away. Once a year a special evangelist came for a week of meetings. I distinctly remember the preacher that year was a Dr. Ironsides. I now know it was the Holy Spirit speaking to me...when I was crying and holding tightly to the chair in front of me. On our way home my mama explained more to me.

My young heart soon forgot about that experience until two years later when that preacher came back and it all happened again. I was under conviction but afraid to respond when he asked those who wanted salvation to come forward. Even now, at 93, those times in my life are very real to me. "God is long suffering, not willing that any should perish".

It was when I was 12 years old and we had moved to a neighboring town that I heard and understood the gospel and the Holy Spirit enabled my heart to respond to God's call to me. It was in January and the snow was deep. We lived on the outskirts of town with a long walk ahead of us. Mama and I trudged through the deep snow and arrived at the church where Bob and I would years later be commissioned to be missionaries. It was easy to go forward that night. What freedom to know I was God's child and my sins forgiven. Shortly before my mama died, I wrote and thanked her for her love and concern for my soul.

The next big chapter in my life began when I was in the fourth grade. I was looking at a magazine that had pictures of foreign countries where people suffered so greatly without any resources. It made me so sad but knew I couldn't help.

I was 14 when I first heard a missionary. From then on, there were many more. I told the Lord I was willing to follow Him anywhere. He began to lead and weave events and people together. The main person in my life and God's plan and purpose was Bob. Just before World War II began, he was able to go to Bolivia as a missionary with fifteen others from our church, including our pastor and his family. By the end of two years five of the men had been killed when trying to reach a savage tribe. At the end of three years, the war was ending and I was granted a visa. Almost three years to the day after Bob had left the States, I arrived in Bolivia and we were married.

We moved to a different area of that country where our first son was born. By this time we had decided to go to the States and rethink God's call to Bolivia. God made his will clear to us. We applied to Baptist Mid-Missions and travelled to Brazil where God led us into several fruitful ministries which continue to be blessed by God to this day.

This is briefly my life story until now.

You know where I am now....living with my precious daughter who has opened her heart and home to me. I trust I will be here until Jesus comes. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Many of you have travelled this road with me. He has blessed us all. Thank you for coming along.

In His care,  
Julie Collins